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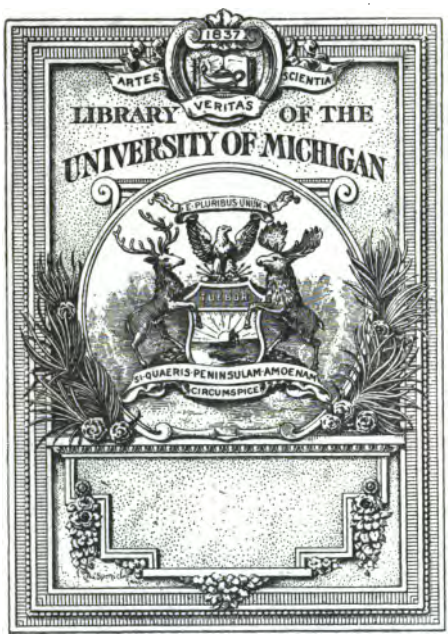
MASTERPIECES OF THE MASTERS OF FICTION

WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE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MASTERPIECES OF THE MASTERS OF FICTION

BY

WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE

NEW YORK
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1912

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MASTERPIECES OF THE MASTERS OF FICTION

PREFACE

A SHORT time ago I determined that instead of taking up any new works of fiction I would go over the masterpieces which I had read long since and see what changes time had made in my impressions of them. To do this I chose some forty of the most distinguished authors and decided to select one story from each,— the best one, if I could make up my mind which that was — at all events, one which stood in the first rank of his productions. I determined to read these in succession, one after another, in the shortest time possible, and thus get a comprehensive notion of the whole. Of course under such conditions exhaustive criticism would be out of the question, but I thought that the general perspective and the comparative merits and faults of each work would appear more vividly in this manner than in any other way.

The productions of living authors were discarded, as well as all fiction in verse.

Arranged chronologically, the selections I made were as follows:

1535 .... RABELAIS ..... "Gargantua."
1605-1615 CERVANTES .... "Don Quixote."
1715-1735 . LE SAGE ..... "Gil Blas."
1719 .... DEFOE ..... "Robinson Crusoe."

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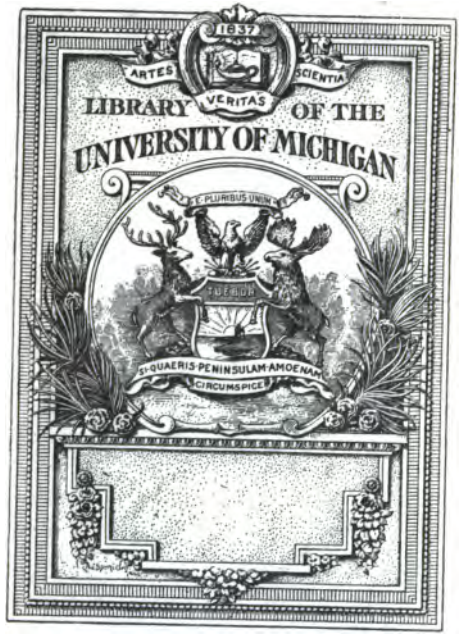
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I think I see many picking out here and there a name, and hear them saying, "What a bad selection! Wilkie Collins ought to be in the list rather than Charles Reade; 'Vanity Fair' ought to be in the place of 'Henry Esmond,' 'Waverly' in the place of 'Ivanhoe'," etc., etc. But if we except two or three names like Manzoni and Gogol, who are not yet estimated at their full value by English and American readers, I think common opinion will justify, in a general way, my catalogue of authors, and I feel sure that the works chosen, if not the masterpieces, are at least fairly typical of each.

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GARGANTUA

FRANÇOIS RABELAIS

COLERIDGE classed Rabelais among the greatest creative minds of the world, with Shakespeare, Dante, Cervantes, etc. Not many will be found to-day who will agree with such an estimate. Rabelais himself would perhaps laugh at it as heartily as he laughed at the vices and foibles of his time.

" Gargantua," a burlesque romance, is the biography of a good-natured giant of that name, the son of King Grangousier, who is born in a remarkable manner out of the left ear of Gargamelle, his mother. The author expresses a doubt whether his readers will thoroughly believe the truth of this strange nativity, but says that it is not impossible with God, and that there is nothing in the Bible against it. He cites the examples of other prodigies and declares that he is not so impudent a liar as Pliny was in treating of strange births. Then follow many absurd and farcical descriptions of the conduct and apparel of the infant giant, his colors and liveries, his wooden horses, and the silly instruction given to him by foolish sophisters. In Paris he steals the bells of Notre Dame to adorn the neck of the hideous great mare upon whose back he has travelled thither, and Master Janotus is sent to him to pronounce a great oration, imploring the return

of the bells. This nonsensical speech is a laughable potpourri of French, Latin, and gibberish. The bells are returned, and now Gargantua submits himself to the government of his new tutor, Ponocrates, who establishes a novel system of instruction for his big pupil.

The book gives a detailed description of the ingenious division of time made by this wise preceptor, so that every moment of the day might be devoted to the acquisition of some useful branch of knowledge.

A strife arises between the shepherds of the country and some cake-bakers of the neighboring kingdom of Lerne. The cake-bakers, being worsted, complain to Picrochole, their king, who collects an army and invades the country of Grangousier, pillaging and ravaging everywhere. But when the invaders come to steal the grapes of the convent of Seville, the stout Friar John with his "staff of the cross" lays about him energetically dealing death and destruction on every side. Picrochole storms the rock and castle of Clermond, and news is brought to Grangousier of the invasion. The good old king at first tries to conciliate his neighbor, and sends him a great abundance of cakes and other gifts, but the choleric Picrochole will not retire, though he keeps everything that is sent to him. The Duke of Smalltrash, the Earl of Swashbuckler, and Captain Durtaille persuade him that he is about to conquer the world, and there is a long burlesque catalogue of all the countries they are to subdue,

after which they will return, sit down, rest and be merry. But the wise Echephron, another of the king's counsellors, tells him that it will be more prudent to take their rest and enjoyment at once and not wait till they have conquered the world. Meanwhile Gargantua is sent forth against Picrochole. The enemy's artillery has so little power against him that he combs the cannonballs out of his hair. Among other episodes, he unwittingly eats up six pilgrims in a salad, but one of them strikes the nerve of a hollow tooth in his mouth, upon which he takes them all out again. They escape, and then one of them shows the others how their adventure had been foretold by the Prophet David in the Psalms.

There is much droll conversation at a feast given by Gargantua to Friar John. The stout friar has many adventures, and plays an important part in the attack upon Picrochole's army, when the poor choleric king flees in disguise and at last becomes a porter at Lyons. Here he is as testy and pettish as ever, and hopes for the fulfillment of a prophecy that he should be restored to his kingdom "at the coming of the Cocklicranes," who it seems could never come at all.

Gargantua proclaims amnesty to the vanquished, the spoil is divided and Friar John rewarded by the establishment of the Abbey of Theleme, which is filled with all beautiful things and inhabited by fair knights and ladies who keep no hours nor vigils, take no vows, but enjoy the delights of liberty under the rule, "Do what thou

wilt," spurred by their own instincts to virtuous actions and with no temptation to transgress the laws.

In a very attractive prologue to this strange medley, the author sets our curiosity agog with the simile of a philosophical dog and a marrow bone, telling his readers to break the bone and suck out the allegorical sense "or the things proposed to be signified by these Pythagorical symbols." So the world has been trying very hard ever since to guess whether Gargantua was Francis I of France or Henry d'Albret of Navarre; whether Friar John was Cardinal Chatillon or Martin Luther, or both together; whether Picrochole was Charles V or someone else; whether the cake-bakers were Popish priests or anyone in particular; and so on to the end of a very long chapter. Certainly the personages described in this burlesque had to be obscurely drawn in order to protect the author from the dungeon or the stake. In one place Rabelais intimates that he did not mean anything at all by his absurdities. "When I did dictate them I thought thereon no more than you who possibly were drinking the whilst I was. For in the composing of this very lordly book I never lost nor bestowed any more nor any other time than what was appointed to serve me for taking my bodily refection, that is, whilst I was eating and drinking." And indeed "Gargantua" is a work that, like the verses of Ennius to which he alludes, smells much more of the wine than the oil; for, with

all its drollery, and occasional wisdom, there are chapters which seem little less than the products of inebriety. Moreover, the work is defaced, especially the earlier part of it, by a mass of obscenity which is not to be excused either by the manners of the time nor by the exigencies of the story.

DON QUIXOTE

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

AMONG works of prose fiction "Don Quixote" has undoubtedly the most universal reputation. Mr. Henry Edward Watts, the latest and best translator, considers it "the finest book," and Justin McCarthy, the recent editor of Shelton's version, calls it "the noblest novel" in the world. Probably this would be the verdict of a majority of the best literary critics.

The Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance is more widely known and recognized among mankind everywhere than any other single character in fiction. And indeed there has never been any other character more elaborately developed.

In the matter of plot, as well as personages, the scope of this work is rather narrow. It is merely a series of adventures, and while the priest, the barber, the bachelor, the duke, the duchess, and many other persons appear incidentally, and while all of these are well sketched, the work would be nothing except for the wonderful sayings and doings of the mad knight and his squire. And the contrast between the two sets forth in the strongest possible relief the characteristics of each. Don Quixote, solemn, tall, lank, "with cheeks that kissed each other on the inside," and

Sancho, short, fat, round-bellied,— the knight filled with fine spiritual fire, his madness enhanced by endless fasts and vigils; the squire sleeping, eating, thinking of nothing but the facts of physical existence,— Don Quixote, the dreamer, the idealist, the gentleman — for there is no one trait which shines through all his madness as unmistakably as his gentility; Sancho, a coarse, sensuous clod, an odd mixture of simplicity and shrewdness, garrulous, full of proverbs, with a rustic and very fleshly philosophy of his own, a squire who sometimes cheats his master with false tales.

Don Quixote goes forth upon his battered Rozinante, to redress all wrongs, actual or imaginary, to fight windmills, to engage in desperate battles with flocks of sheep; to sail upon enchanted barks; to fly through the air on a wooden horse; and perform a thousand extravagances, travesties of the impossible prodigies recorded in books of chivalry and enchantment.

The description of Don Quixote's madness is masterly. His inability to separate actual occurrences from the figments of his imagination appears with wonderful power; for instance, in the scene of the puppets, where he demolishes the apparatus of the show, and then agrees to pay for the damage, and again refuses when the lady for whom compensation is demanded has been already rescued, fact and fancy contending with each other inextricably in his soul. As a study in psychology, no character of fiction or drama out-

side of Shakespeare is at all comparable to "Don Quixote." Yet through all his grotesque hallucinations appears his essential nobility. As Sancho says of him, "He has a soul as clean as a pitcher. He can do no harm to anyone, but good to all. He has no malice at all. A child might persuade him it is night at noonday. And it is for this simplicity I love him like my heartstrings, and cannot be handy at leaving him for all the pranks he plays." Thus do we love the simple-minded, even in madness.

One of the clearest evidences of Cervantes' genius is his power to make even the vagaries of a madman so laughable. In any other hands the adventures of Don Quixote would not be funny. I remember once seeing a dramatic representation of the story, in which Henry Irving impersonated the hero. It was well done, but it was not amusing. The poor knight was so utterly wrapped in his hallucinations that he was an object of pity rather than of laughter. But in the novel itself the humor of Cervantes overcomes even our sympathy. The wild reasoning of Don Quixote is often so irresistibly absurd that his madness is forgotten. For instance, he does penance in the Sierra Morena in honor of his Dulcinea, and proposes to imitate Amadis and Orlando, who tore up trees by the roots, slew shepherds, demolished houses, and performed a thousand other extravagances. Sancho remarks that these knights of old had a reason for their follies and penances, but that Don Quixote had

none, to which his master replies, "In this consists the refinement of my plan. A knight errant that runs mad with cause deserves no thanks, but to do so without reason is the point, giving my lady to understand what I should perform in the wet, if I do this in the dry."

The Spaniards say that "Don Quixote" is untranslatable. Of course a masterpiece of this kind can not be enjoyed to the full, with all its delicate aroma, in any other tongue, and in one sense it can not be fully understood by any one who is not himself a Spaniard, who has not the feelings, the surroundings, and perhaps the prejudices to which the great book was addressed. But, judged by such a standard, what masterpiece of past times can any of us fully enjoy? In another sense, however, a foreigner can enjoy "Don Quixote" better than a Spaniard; for some of its most characteristic features are those which to one who lives amid the same surroundings will pass unobserved. No one can judge of the perspective of a great work unless he be far enough away to see it in its relations to the rest of the world. In this larger sense, I think that Don Quixote can be understood by an American of our century as well as by a Spaniard of the time in which it was written. Something of the details will escape him, but the beauty of the whole may be even more apparent. The things that we lose in translation,— for instance, the sonorous solemnity of the magniloquent diction of Don Quixote,— are atoned for by the fact that Don

Quixote himself is a more distinctive type to us than he could have been to the people of his own age and country.

I am not sure but that the Englishman or the American can grasp the sum total of his qualities better through a good translation than even in the original. The Spanish of "Don Quixote" is somewhat archaic, and in places a little obscure, even to the most proficient in the living tongue. So elusive is the pleasure which comes with the dry humor of such a book that it must offer itself spontaneously, it must fit the mood of the reader, it must be the luxury of an idle hour, or much of the charm of it will escape. Therefore it is that I have found in Shelton's translation, and still more in the recent rendering of Mr. Watts, a keener pleasure than I have ever been able to dig out of the original mine.

"Don Quixote" is not without great faults. It was written carelessly. This indeed often adds to the naturalness of the descriptions and the situations, but the blemishes are sometimes self-evident and glaring. For instance, after Sancho's ass has been stolen by Gines de Pasamonte, the squire is represented, sometimes as walking, sometimes as riding on the very animal he has lost. Some of Cervantes's commentators, like Clemencin, who are mathematical rather than artistic in their criticisms, call our attention to the numerous incongruities of this sort. But the greatest masters of literature, even Homer and Shakespeare — have been guilty in the same way.

Indeed, there is a good deal in "Don Quixote" which reminds one of Shakespeare. Take for instance the following discourse between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza:

"Prithee, tell me, hast thou not seen some comedy played wherein are introduced kings, emperors, pontiffs, knights, ladies and divers other personages? One plays the bully, another the knave; one the merchant, one the soldier; others the witty fool and the foolish lover; and, the comedy ended and their apparel put off, all the players remain equal."

"Yes, marry have I," answered Sancho.

"But the same," pursued Don Quixote, "happens in the comedy and commerce of this world, wherein some play the emperors, others the pontiffs; in short all the parts that can be introduced into a drama; but on reaching the end, which is when life is done, Death strips all of the robes which distinguished them, and they remain equal in the grave."

"A brave comparison!" cried Sancho, "though not so new but that I have heard it many and divers times, like that of the game of chess,— how, so long as the game lasts, each piece has its particular office, and the game being finished, they are all mixed, shuffled, and jumbled, and put away into a bag, which is much like putting away life in the grave."

"Every day, Sancho," quoth Don Quixote, "thou becomest less simple and more wise."

The passages in "Macbeth," "Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care," and "The sleeping and the dead are but as pictures," find their counterparts in the following dialogue, in which Sancho says to his master:

"I only know that while I sleep I have no fear, nor hope, nor trouble, nor glory; and good luck to him who invented sleep, a cloak which covers all a man's thoughts, the meat which takes away hunger, the water which quenches thirst, the fire which warms the cold, the cold which tempers the heat; to end up, the general coin with which all things are bought, the balance and weight which levels the shepherd with the king and the fool with the wise man. There is only one thing, as I have heard say, is bad about sleep, and it is that it looks like death, for between the sleeping and the dead there is very little difference."

The great fault of "Don Quixote" is its excessive prolixity. Provided the best parts might be selected, it would be a better novel if it filled only half the space. The same moralizing by the knight and his squire is too often repeated; the same proverbs come forth again and again. This is the reason why the work is read far less at the present time than it used to be. In these busy days there is not much place for the four volume novel.

Then, too, the long episodes, the story of Cardenio, the tale of the captive and of Impertinent Curiosity, would be better told as separate narratives rather than as parts of a book with which they have no proper connection. The introduction of such stories was one of the tricks of the time, but it is an artistic blemish. On the other hand, Cervantes's use of the Moorish historian, Ben Engeli, is a literary device admirably employed, and the point at which he first introduces

Ben Engeli's narrative is a delicious satire upon a literary trick common to novelists even of the present time. For it will be remembered that the terrible conflict between Don Quixote and the Biscayan was left suspended, as it were, in mid-air, each of the mighty combatants having raised his sword and being prepared to dash at the other, at which point the narrative was interrupted, the author being unable to learn anything of the outcome of the fray until he discovered in the Alcazar of Toledo the manuscript of the Arabian historiographer.

"Don Quixote" has been the model upon which many of the best works of fiction have been based. One can see distinct traces of Cervantes's methods in "Pickwick Papers." There are undoubtedly many points of difference between Mr. Pickwick and Don Quixote, yet the points of resemblance are very clear; and Sam Weller corresponds more nearly to Sancho than any character in modern fiction. The lugubrious episodes in the "Pickwick Papers" are not wholly unlike those in "Don Quixote," and the solemnity of these episodes furnishes the same contrast to the merry absurdities of the narrative itself.

Ichabod Crane is in some respects a Yankee "Knight of the Sorrowful Figure," though devoid of the madness and of the high spiritual aims of his Castilian prototype.

"Don Quixote," like many other masterpieces, like the "Odyssey," "Hamlet," "Paradise Lost," and the "Divine Comedy," falters a lit-

tle at the end. Cervantes was evidently in a hurry to finish it, and the conversion of the knight upon his death-bed is somewhat sudden. But the defects in this great work are (to use a very hackneyed simile) like the spots upon the sun. It will always remain one of the world's greatest masterpieces.

GIL BLAS

ALAIN RENÉ LE SAGE

IF, as some say, the object of fiction is simply to amuse, no work of fiction has better attained that object than "Gil Blas." It is the greatest and the most celebrated of that class of novels called the *novela picaresca,* or rogue story, and consists of a succession of the liveliest and merriest incidents, slenderly connected as parts of the autobiography of a Spanish lackey, and narrated in a style that is a model of luminous simplicity. The hero encounters every variety of good and evil fortune, each following the other like the figures of a kaleidoscope. From the moment when, as a simple youth, he is sent forth into the world with a mule and forty ducats, he plunges into the midst of ludicrous adventures. At the first town he entertains at supper a parasite who calls him "the ornament of Oviedo," "the torch of philosophy," "the eighth wonder of the world," and who, after gorging himself at the expense of the young student, laughs in his face at his credulity. He is next decoyed into a cave of robbers, where he is locked in and made to serve as the Ganymede of the band, but before long he escapes and rescues a fair lady, Doña Mencia, who gratefully gives him a thousand ducats and a valuable ring. But he tells of his

good fortune, and is fleeced of his money and his ring in a confidence game skillfully played by one Camilla and by Don Rafael, her pretended brother, acting in concert with his own valet, Ambrose. In his misfortune he meets Fabricio, an old schoolmate, who advises him to become a lackey rather than a tutor, since the former calling opens a better career than teaching to a man of shrewd wit. Gil Blas is convinced, and seeks a situation.

His first place is with the fat licentiate, Sedillo, where he serves faithfully and leads a dog's life in hopes of a legacy, as soon as his master shall be carried off with the gout. He gets as the legacy his master's library, consisting of three books, "The Perfect Cook," a work on indigestion, and a breviary. Then he takes a situation with Dr. Sangrado, the physician who has hastened Sedillo's departure from the world, from whom he learns in a word the whole art of healing, to wit, bleeding profusely and administering vast quantities of hot water, a system which Gil Blas puts into practice as Sangrado's deputy, kills most of his patients, and has to flee from Valladolid in the night. After many adventures he arrives at Madrid, becomes the servant of Don Mathias de Silva, a dissolute young nobleman, and learns much of the ways of the world. Dressed in his master's clothes, he makes love to a great lady, as he supposes, but finds that she is Laura, the maid of the actress Arsenia, whom his master visits. Don Mathias is killed in a duel, whereupon

our hero takes service with the actress, and has fine times with his dear Laura, but at last leaves the place because he is unwilling "to live any longer with the seven mortal sins." Next he takes a situation with Don Vincent de Guzman, fancies that his master's daughter Aurora is in love with him, and makes a great fool of himself at a midnight interview, where she seeks his aid in behalf of her passion for Don Luis Pacheco. A very pretty story follows of her efforts in the guise of a man to inspire Pacheco's love, efforts which are not unlike those of Rosalind with Orlando, and which in like manner are crowned with success. Gil Blas then goes to live with Pacheco's uncle, an asthmatic old man, who looks "like the resurrection of Lazarus," but who loves the young and beautiful Euphrasia. Gil Blas finds another gallant hidden in her room, and tells his master, but he is dismissed for his pains.

Our hero now renders a service to a young nobleman, Don Alphonso de Leyva, who is a fugitive from justice, and goes with him to a cave, where Don Raphael and Ambrose are found disguised as hermits, and the former gives a graphic account of his past life and rogueries. At first Gil Blas and Don Alphonso join them in their rascally enterprises. They all array themselves as inquisitors, and proceed to appropriate the property of Samuel Simon, a converted Jew, whom they charge with relapsing into heresy. The questions propounded in behalf of the Holy Office are highly grotesque. But neither Gil

Blas nor Don Alphonso are willing to continue such a life, so they part from their companions, and Don Alphonso, who is soon after happily married to Seraphina (quite a long love story hangs thereby), makes Gil Blas the intendant of his castle. But Gil Blas quarrels with Seraphina's maid, whereupon he leaves the service of his friend and betakes himself to Granada, where he obtains a place as secretary of the archbishop. The description of the learned prelate, short, fat, and very vain of his oratorical gifts, is extremely lifelike, and the following scene, where he requires Gil Blas to give him a warning of his failing powers, is deservedly celebrated:

One evening he repeated before me with enthusiasm a homily which he intended to pronounce next day in the cathedral. He was not contented with asking me what I thought of it in a general way; he obliged me to single out the particular places which I most admired. I had the good luck to mention his favorite passages, those which he looked upon as the best. By this means I passed in his judgment for a man who had a delicate knowledge of the true beauties of a work. "That," he cried, "is what you call having taste and sentiment! Go to, my friend, I assure you, you have not got Boeotian ears." In a word, he was so well satisfied with me that he said to me, with some vivacity, "Gil Blas, give thyself no uneasiness about thy fortune. I undertake to make it agreeable. I love thee, and as a proof of my affection, make thee my confidant. . . . Listen with attention to what I am going to say to thee. My chief pleasure consists in preaching. The Lord gives a blessing to my homilies. They touch the hearts of sinners and

make them seriously reflect and have recourse to penitence. I have the satisfaction of seeing a miser, terrified by the images which I represent to his avarice, open his treasures and squander them with a prodigal hand. I have also turned a voluptuary from his pleasures, filled hermitages with the ambitious, and strengthened in her duty a wife who had been shaken by the allurements of a lover. These conversions, which are frequent, ought of themselves to arouse me to work. Nevertheless, I will confess my weakness, I propose to myself another reward, a reward which the delicacy of my virtue reproaches me with in vain; I mean the esteem of the world for fine polished writing. The honor of being regarded a perfect orator has many charms for me. My works are found equally strong and delicate, but I would like to avoid the fault of good authors who write too long, and I would retire with all my reputation. Therefore, my dear Gil Blas," continued the prelate, "I exact one thing of thy zeal. When thou shalt perceive that my pen smacks of old age, when thou shalt see my genius flagging, don't fail to advise me of it. I do not trust my own judgment upon that point. My self-love may deceive me. That observation requires a disinterested mind, and I make choice of thine, which I know is good. I will rely upon thy judgment. . . . Do not fear to be frank and sincere, for I shall receive thy advice as a mark of thy affection for me. Besides, thy own interest is concerned; if, unfortunately for thee, it should come to my ears that they say in the city my discourses have no longer their wonted force and it is high time for me to rest, I declare to thee plainly that thou shalt lose my friendship as well as the fortune I have promised. Such will be the fruit of thy foolish discretion."

After the bishop has had an attack of apoplexy,

and the time comes for Gil Blas to perform his duty, this is what happens:

The only thing that embarrassed me now was how to break the ice. Luckily the orator himself extricated me from that difficulty, by asking what people said of him, and if they were satisfied with his last discourse. I answered that his homilies were always admired, but in my opinion the last had not succeeded so well as the rest, in affecting the audience. "How, friend!" replied he, with astonishment, "has it met with any Aristarchus?" "No, sir," said I, "by no means; such works as yours are not to be criticised; everybody is charmed with them. Nevertheless, since you have laid your injunctions upon me to be free and sincere, I will take the liberty to tell you that your last discourse, in my judgment, has not altogether the energy of your other performances. Are you not of the same opinion?"

My master grew pale at these words; and said, with a forced smile, "So then, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your taste?" "I don't say so, sir," cried I, quite disconcerted; "I think it excellent, although a little inferior to your other productions." "I understand you," he replied, "you think I am failing, don't you? Come, be plain; you believe it is time for me to think of retiring." "I should not have been so bold," said I, "as to speak so freely, if your grace had not commanded me; I do no more, therefore, than obey you; and I most humbly beg that you will not be offended at my freedom." "God forbid," cried he with precipitation, "God forbid that I should find fault with it. In so doing, I should be very unjust. I don't at all take it ill that you speak your sentiment; it is your sentiment only that I find bad. I have been most egregiously deceived in your narrow understanding."

Though I was disconcerted, I endeavored to find some mitigation, in order to set things to rights again; but how is it possible to appease an incensed author, one especially who has been accustomed to hear himself praised? "Say no more, my child," said he, "you are yet too raw to distinguish the true from the false. Know that I never composed a better homily than that which you disapprove; for my genius, thank Heaven, hath as yet lost nothing of its vigor. Henceforth I will make a better choice of a confidant, and keep one of greater ability than you. Go," he added (pushing me by the shoulders out of the room), "go tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats, and may Heaven conduct you with that sum. Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas, I wish you all manner of prosperity, with a little more taste."

And so the comedy goes on. One new face after another appears on the scene, among them Captain Hannibal Chinchilla, with monstrous moustache, who has left an eye in Naples, an arm in Lombardy, and a leg in the Low Country; then Count Galiano, who is fonder of his monkey than of his servants. Our hero becomes one of the secretaries of the prime minister, the Duke of Lerma, where he acquires great honor, but for a long time, no pay. Finally he sells his influence, gets into court intrigues, rises step by step, until he is about to marry the daughter of a rich jeweller, when he is arrested and thrown into the tower of Segovia. Here he is found by his faithful valet Scipio, who gets him released. He now determines to renounce the court forever, and his old friend Don Alphonso gives him a small estate at Lirias. But when the new king comes in, Gil

Blas is tempted back again, rises rapidly under Count Olivares, and when this minister falls, follows him into retirement. Upon the death of the count, Gil Blas returns to Lirias, where his marriage and his happy life with his wife, Dorothea, close the story.

Many of the personages of the tale reappear at the most unlooked for places and in the most unexpected characters. For instance, the two rascals, Don Raphael and Ambrose, turn up as monks in a convent, where they have led a life of great piety and penitence for over a year. But Don Raphael is the treasurer and Ambrose is the porter of the monastery, and soon these worthy brothers disappear with all the funds. They come to their deserts, however, for the last that is seen of them they are walking with other culprits to an *auto da fe,* their heads decorated with the *carochas* or pasteboard caps upon which are painted the flames and devils of eternal punishment.

Another interesting character who comes in at different parts of the story is the schoolmate of Gil Blas, Fabricio, the son of the barber Nunez. At first a valet, he next turns up as a poet, having composed a worthless comedy which was a great success, from which he judged the public was a good milch cow. Some amusing descriptions follow of Fabricio's opinion as to what constitutes a fine style. He reads a sonnet which Gil Blas cannot understand, but the son of the barber Nunez insists that this shows its excellence — that

obscurity is the charm of all works that aim to be sublime, and that it is quite enough if the poet thinks they have a meaning. There are amusing portraits of Fabricio's friends, who imagine themselves great authors and who dispute and fight at their host's table over the comparative merits of their wretched productions. Next Fabricio is found in the hospital; he has abandoned the Muses and written an ode to bid them an eternal adieu. But as soon as he is well he is back at his old occupation, and gets a place with a liberal patron, Gomez de Ribera. He writes a play, which, being fortunately hissed and hooted by the populace, gets him a good pension from his patron, who obstinately admires it and says, "*Victrix causa Diis placuit sed victa Catoni.*" There is an amusing account of a dinner which Fabricio gives to his literary friends, where they discuss the question what constitutes the chief interest in the Iphigenia of Euripides, one of the guests solemnly maintaining that it was not the peril of the heroine, but the wind. "I take the part of the Greeks," says Melchior de Villegas. "I espouse their purpose. I only wish for the departure of their fleet, and I look with an indifferent eye upon Iphigenia in her peril, since her death is a means of obtaining from the gods a favorable wind."

Le Sage is almost as hard upon the doctors as Molière. Dr. Sangrado has become a type. He was so expeditious that he did not often give time for any of his patients to call a notary in order to

make a will. After they had been bled to death, he always insisted that they died because they had not been bled enough and had not taken enough hot water. The doctor admitted to Gil Blas that he did not often cure his patients, and that if he were not so sure of his principles he might have been tempted to think that his bleeding and hot water had really injured them, but that he could not change his methods because he had published a book! In his last interview with Gil Blas, the good doctor (now retired from practice) deplores the decadence of medicine, but is caught by his own pupil drinking wine in violation of his own precepts.

All through the book stories of the events of their own lives are told by the principal characters. The robbers in the cave, Doña Mencia, Don Alphonso, Don Raphael, Scipio, and others, all give us their histories, which resemble in miniature the principal narrative. The novel is a very long one, and although it is well written everywhere, the latter part contains some incidents which seem like repetitions, and the interest is not held quite up to the standard of the earlier books.

"Gil Blas" is an admirable prose satire, a satire written with the light raillery of Horace rather than the invective of Juvenal. It sparkles everywhere with French wit, and though the scene is laid in Spain (the model for that kind of story being the early Spanish tales like "Lazarillo de Tormes"), yet the style and the charac-

ters are essentially French, and many of the latter are taken from the acquaintance of the author himself. The illusion, however, is well maintained, and it is only upon rare occasions (such as the raillery of the *petits maîtres*) that one notices characteristics which do not seem quite at home in Spain. Near the close of the book there are a number of historical characters (Spanish, of course), but these are by no means the liveliest or best. Indeed, it may well be doubted whether "Gil Blas" has not rather suffered than gained by the introduction of its historical features.

I have noticed that while I can enjoy "Don Quixote" perhaps better in the translation than the original, "Gil Blas," on the other hand, sounds more natural to me in a Spanish version than in the original French. This may be mere fancy, or perhaps it may be attributed to this, that "Gil Blas," being a foreign production, seems more natural after having been acclimated, as it were, by translation into the language of the country in which its scenes are laid. "Don Quixote," on the other hand, being thoroughly Spanish does not lose its national characteristics, no matter what the language in which it is communicated to the reader.

ROBINSON CRUSOE

DANIEL DEFOE

THE main feature of this story — an account of the efforts of a castaway to live comfortably without human aid,—is extremely attractive to the young. Many of the scenes are very vivid,—the shipwreck, the lonely island, the birds startled at the sound of the gun, the wild-cat that observes the new intruder; his efforts to provide for himself food, clothing, and shelter; the construction of his strange dwelling, the planting of his crops, the care of his goats, the building of his canoe, and most of all, the account of the wild man Friday, whom he secures for his servant,—all these things are ingeniously and attractively described. But the repetitions which occur throughout the book make it in places very tedious. Crusoe tells us in his diary the same story which he has already related in the preceding narrative; he moralizes again and again upon his folly in disregarding the advice of his good father; he computes over and over the evils and the blessings that have befallen him; and tells many times and at great length the story of how he became a Christian and learned to pray. Much of the book is a sermon of Puritan dimensions. This is one of the works where the

abridgement is better than the original. The homilies are commonplace, there are few striking passages and the style, though occasionally picturesque, is often dry and involved.

Of course in such a work there can be little portraiture of character. Robinson Crusoe himself is not a specially interesting person. His ingenuity is all that attracts us. In one or two places his jumbled motives are described with unconscious *naïveté*. For instance, he says, when he saw Friday escaping from the two savages who had intended to make a meal of him: "It came very firmly upon my thoughts, and indeed irresistibily, that now was the time to get me a servant and perhaps a companion or assistant, and that I was called plainly by Providence to save this poor creature's life." So he killed the pursuers and appropriated Friday.

The description of Friday is well conceived. This interesting barbarian worships his master's gun and talks to it, desiring it not to kill him. He says of Benamuckee, the creator, "All things say 'Oh!' to him," and the objections of this child of nature to his master's theology are very lifelike. "If God much stronger than the devil, why God no kill the devil, so make him no more do wicked?" And after Crusoe had replied, "God will at last punish him severely; he is reserved for the judgment and is to be cast into the bottomless pit, to dwell with everlasting fire," Friday's rejoinder has never yet, I think, been

successfully answered,—"Why not kill the devil *now*, not kill great ago?" It was natural that Crusoe should say, "Here I was run down again by him to the last degree."

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

JONATHAN SWIFT

I SUPPOSE the human mind is naturally inclined to a belief in dwarfs and giants. There are legends about them in the folk-lore of nearly every people. It requires only an exaggeration of the things we know to believe in larger men and smaller men than we have ever seen. In "Gulliver's Travels" Swift has worked out the details of comparative size with great particularity, and the book is an illustration of the principle that even a palpable fiction may be made so definite and circumstantial that it will almost command belief.

The figure of the great Man-Mountain dragging the tiny fleet of Lilliput is vivid and lifelike, and when in Brobdignag the same giant becomes a helpless dwarf, is carried like a mouse in the mouth of a dog, and has fierce struggles with a frog and a rat, the scenes do not seem at all impossible. The art of the story-teller gives probability to the wildest fancies, and you can hardly doubt, as you read, that the kingdoms of the big people and the little people must have existed, so plain are the scenes before your eyes.

But Swift's description of the physical characteristics of these peoples is not more vivid than his

account of their customs and social peculiarities.

Much of his satire was meant to set off certain follies of his own time, but to us the most valuable part of it is that which portrays the general frailties of humanity. He holds up to nature a mirror which, while it distorts the features a little, still makes the caricature extremely lifelike. Even where the Lilliputians are most absurd we recognize their similarity to ourselves. The quarrels between the partisans of low and high heeled shoes, the revolution and obstinate war concerning the proper manner of opening an egg, are not a whit more nonsensical than some of our own social and theological controversies. The Lilliputians bury their dead with the head down in order that the body may be in the right position for the resurrection, just as the Mahometan faces Mecca in his prayers, the Christian builds his church according to certain points of the compass, and the ritualist makes his genuflexions in carefully prescribed forms, for reasons quite as cogent and unanswerable.

The "little people" well knew there were no other regions of the earth than Lilliput and Blefuscu, and here, too, we are like them. Most of us consider that all there is of importance in the universe is that which falls within our own spheres of observation.

No one can read Swift's story without reflecting that our own little world must seem much like Lilliput to the great eye which looks upon this

planet as only one among the islands of the firmament.

In Laputa we see ourselves even more clearly. We can find counterparts of the great lord of wide attainments and eminent services, who was accounted ignorant and stupid because he had so ill an ear for music that he beat time in the wrong place. The philosophers who moved about the earth with one eye turned inward and the other upward toward the zenith, and who constantly required a flapper to bring them to their senses, are old and familiar acquaintances.

The proposition to impose a tax upon men's vices has been put into practice many a time, and the scheme of a general raffle to secure the prizes of patronage would seem to be a tolerable refuge from our former system of political appointments.

But all through "Gulliver's Travels" the folly and wickedness of men is greatly overdrawn, and in the final voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms the colors are quite too dark to be truthful. This part of the book is not a mere satire, but a malignant invective against humanity, so bitter that it ceases to be either attractive or convincing. The lawyers sell out to the highest bidder, the doctors kill their patients to justify their own prognostications; all mankind is vile — worse than the beasts,— until we begin to feel an aversion for an author whose judgment has been so greatly distorted by his own malevolence. We can not help inferring that he who attributes such

qualities to his fellow-creatures must himself have a large share of them; and it is not surprising to find great irregularities and scandals in the life of Swift, nor to learn that at last his mind flickered out in imbecility.

MANON LESCAUT

THE ABBÉ PRÉVOST

WHAT is the subtle charm of "Manon Lescaut" which has given it the place of a classic in French fiction, and which causes it to be read at the present time with the same delight as when it was written? It does not sparkle with wit, nor is it filled with wisdom. The heroine is far from being an estimable character, and the poor hero, the Chevalier des Grieux, is admirable only in one thing — in his constant and self-sacrificing devotion to the unworthy object of his passion.

He meets her in the courtyard of an inn at Passy. It is a case of love at first sight. They flee from the inn together, and Manon becomes his mistress. The youth is ardent but inexperienced, while the girl, though no older in years, is far maturer, more subtle and self-asserting. It is not many weeks before she forsakes him for a more advantangeous connection. For a long time he is in despair at her faithlessness. At last he enters upon a regular life, and becomes a student in a theological seminary. On the day of his graduation she comes to him again. In a moment all his good resolutions are flung to the winds and he falls at once under her influence. They live for a time upon the money she has acquired from a more opulent lover, but it is

stolen, and he betakes himself to the gambler's expedients to restore their shattered fortunes. She leads him into evil courses, and many are the tricks they play upon her other admirers. Twice they are thrown into prison, and on the last occasion, to gratify the revenge of a defrauded and disappointed suitor, Manon is sent with a chain gang to the French settlement at New Orleans. Her lover goes with her, and after they are established in their distant abode they decide to invoke the aid of the church upon their union and to become man and wife. But the governor of the province has other views for Manon, and desires to marry her to his nephew. A duel follows, and the Chevalier des Grieux is forced to flee. Manon accompanies him to the wilderness, but, unable to endure the fatigues and perils of such a life, she expires in the arms of her lover.

This sounds like rather poor material for a novel, yet so charmingly and simply is the story told, so deep and so natural is the Chevalier's passion, that he invests his wayward mistress in our eyes with the same charms that he sees in her himself, until we pardon the infidelities of the beautiful creature almost as readily as he.

TOM JONES

HENRY FIELDING

THERE are some who insist that Fielding's "Tom Jones" has not been surpassed by the work of any of the later novelists.

I confess that on the second reading of this story I failed to find in either plot or portraiture that excellence which would entitle the book to take a preëminent rank among works of fiction. In the succession of adventures which compose the tale there is a recurrence of incidents which resemble each other so closely that they cease to be novel or attractive. Conversations are usually interrupted by the unexpected appearance of some one not desired, or else by an "uproar" followed by a fight, until the repetition becomes monotonous. There is not a character in the book capable of arousing any strong feeling of admiration or sympathy.

Sophia Western is intended to be amiable and attractive, though she gives little evidence of any remarkable or alluring qualities in what she says or does. Her sufferings are hardly great enough to cause distress to the reader, and the manner in which she finally agrees to wed her scapegrace of a lover, without waiting for the probationary year which she had first required, does not betoken any great constancy or strength of purpose.

Tom Jones himself is not beset by those overpowering temptations and strong passions which might in a way excuse his scandalous behavior. He is indeed warm-hearted, courageous, and fond of his benefactor, Mr. Allworthy, and he is apparently somewhat attached even to the young woman to whom he is continually unfaithful. If he has other excellences, they do not appear, while his vices are conspicuous and repulsive. A thoroughly interesting character can not be made out of such material.

On the other hand, hypocrisy becomes living flesh and blood in the person of the discreet, pious, treacherous, cold-blooded Blifil, who "visited his friend Jones but seldom, and never alone," and "cautiously avoided any intimacy lest it might contaminate the sobriety of his own character."

The most picturesque person in the book is undoubtedly Squire Western, with his senseless prejudices and his wild outbreaks of passion.

But if we leave the characters and incidents out of the question, there is a good deal of delightful reading in the book. The author is a consummate master of English. I began "Tom Jones" just after finishing "David Copperfield," and the transition from the style of Dickens to that of Fielding was a refreshing surprise. The chapters which are introductory to each of the so-called "books" of the novel are intended, as the author tells us, to set off the rest by reason of their dulness. Some of them are in fact a little tedious, but many are pleasant excursions into fields of

criticism and satire which mark the author as an essayist of the first order. The mock-heroic manner in which he describes the methods of his own work, the burlesque praises which he bestows upon it, and his contempt for his critics, are very amusing.

"This work," he says, "may indeed be considered as a great creation of our own, and for a little reptile of a critic to presume to find fault with any of its parts without knowing the manner in which the whole is connected, and before he comes to the final catastrophe, is a most presumptuous absurdity."

In another place he gives a comic justification of plagiarism from classical authors:

"The ancients," he says, "may be considered as a rich common where every person who has the smallest tenement in Parnassus hath a free right to fatten his muse." "The writers of antiquity were so many wealthy squires from whom the poor might claim an immemorial custom of taking whatever they could come at, so long as they maintained strict honesty among themselves."

His use of epic diction in the description of the commonplace is sometimes irresistibly comic,— for example, the following on the fight of Mollie Seagrim in the churchyard:

"Recount, O Muse, the names of those who fell on this fatal day. First, Jemmy Tweedle felt on his hinder head the direful bone. Him the pleasant banks of sweetly winding Stour had nourished, where he first learnt the vocal art, with which, wandering up and down at wakes

and fairs, he cheered the rural nymphs and swains, when upon the green they interweaved the sprightly dance, while he himself stood fiddling and jumping to his own music. How little now avails his fiddle! He thumps the verdant floor with his carcass."

Contrary to the general opinion, I think that Fielding is entitled to far more praise for the literary quality which pervades his novel than for its "realism" and "fidelity to nature" which are the claims of most of its admirers.

RASSELAS

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

DR. JOHNSON is one of the few men whose reputation is due, not so much to his writings (which are generally the source of all permanent renown in a literary man) as to his conversation and his peculiarities as recorded by his wonderful biographer — things which in most men are the source of a very limited and evanescent fame.

It is not intended here to dispute the conclusions of Macaulay that he was both a great and a good man, but merely to point out how little good work he has put forth to justify his prodigious reputation. For instance, he compiled a a dictionary; and although it was never a very good dictionary, and is now quite obsolete, yet the memory of the tremendous stir it made has lasted down to the present time. He wrote some annotations of Shakespeare's plays, which show that he had a very limited understanding of their meaning, yet his observations have been more generally quoted than those of commentators far more accurate and discerning. He entered the field of fiction and wrote " Rasselas," and there are very few novels (if " Rasselas " can be called a novel at all) which upon their intrinsic merits less deserve an extravagant reputation as one of the classics of our literature.

The plot is the slenderest possible. Rasselas,

the fourth son of the emperor of Abyssinia, is confined within the "Happy Valley," from which exit is impossible, and, wanting nothing, naturally suffers from *ennui*. He spends twenty months in fruitless imaginings, and then four months more in resolving to lose no more time in idle resolves, when he is awakened to more vigorous exertion by hearing a maid who had broken a porcelain cup remark, "What cannot be repaired is not to be regretted." Then for a few hours he "regretted his regret," and from that time bent his whole mind to the means of escape. He spent ten months trying to find a way out (a job which would be laughed at by an able-bodied member of the Alpine Club) then he betook himself to an inventor of a flying machine, who of course came to grief. Finally a poet, named Imlac, told Rasselas of his extensive travels, and they received from the conies, who had "dug holes tending upwards in an oblique line," a hint as to the means of escape, of which Dr. Johnson gives the following rather foggy description: "By piercing the mountain in the same direction, we will begin where the summit hangs over the middle part and labor upwards till we issue up behind the prominence." The two now proceed to tunnel the mountain, and Nekayah, the prince's sister, with her favorite maid, Pekuah, accompany them to the outside world. They journey to Cairo, where they engage in the search for happiness,— philosophy, the pastoral life, material prosperity, solitude, the life led "according to nature," the splen-

dor of courts, the modesty of humble life, marriage, and celibacy, all being successively examined and found wanting. They visit the pyramids, and here Pekuah is carried away by a band of Arabs, but she is afterwards ransomed and relates her adventures (which are not interesting) at considerable length. They admire the learning and happiness of a certain astronomer, but Imlac finds out that he is crazy; they consult an old man whose wisdom has deeply impressed them, but who can give them little comfort; they discuss the merits of conventual life; finally they visit the catacombs, where Imlac discourses on the nature of the soul; and at "the conclusion in which nothing is concluded" (for this is the title of the last chapter), Pekuah thinks she would like to be the prioress of a convent, Nekayah wants to learn all the sciences and found a college, Rasselas desires a little kingdom where he can administer justice, while Imlac and the astronomer (who has now recovered his right mind) "were contented to be driven along the stream of life without directing their course to any particular port." They all know that none of their wishes can be gratified, so they resolve to go home. This conclusion might have been inserted almost anywhere else in the book with equal propriety.

The story is a mere thread upon which is hung a succession of reflections and homilies, some of which are shallow, many common-place and trite, and only a few are at the same time striking, original, and worthy of remembrance.

The author maintains the existence of ghosts because belief in them is supported by the "concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations," and such an opinion "could become universal only by its truth!"

There is very little humor to be found in the ponderous moralizing of this book. There is, however, a touch of quaint satire upon the theories of contemporary French philosophy, that deserves to be remembered. Rasselas is listening to a philosopher who advises his hearers to "throw away the incumbrance of precepts" and carry with them "this simple and intelligible maxim that 'deviation from nature is deviation from happiness.'" He asks what it is to live according to nature, and the philosopher answers:

"'To live according to nature is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects; to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things.'

"The prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer. He therefore bowed and was silent; and the philosopher, supposing him satisfied, and the rest vanquished, rose up and departed with the air of a man that had coöperated with the present system."

The style of "Rasselas" (like that of everything Dr. Johnson wrote) is stilted and affected.

In the Happy Valley " every blast shook spices from the rocks and every month dropped fruits." Its inhabitants " wandered in the gardens of fragrance and slept in the fortresses of security." When Rasselas reaches Cairo he tells us of the gilded youth of that metropolis, that " their mirth was without images, their laughter without motive. . . . The frown of power dejected and the eye of wisdom abashed them."

Of a professor who there lectured on philosophy, Rasselas declares: " He speaks, and attention watches his lips. He reasons, and conviction closes his periods." This might do in an oration, but it is pretty poor for a novel. But worst of all, Dr. Johnson puts into the mouth of the young and innocent Nekayah the following words upon the subject of marriage:

> " When I see and reckon the various forms of connubial infelicity, the unexpected causes of lasting discord, the diversities of temper, the oppositions of opinion, the rude collisions of contrary desire where both are urged by violent impulses, the obstinate contests of disagreeable virtues where both are supported by consciousness of good intention, I am sometimes disposed to think with the severer casuists of most nations, that marriage is rather permitted than approved, and that none, but by the instigation of a passion too much indulged, entangle themselves with indissoluble compacts."

Readers who think that this sort of conversation is natural and beautiful ought to be fond of " Rasselas," but those who do not will inevitably

feel that it was too bad that the author of the great Dictionary had so intimate an acquaintance with so many words.

CANDIDE

FRANCOIS VOLTAIRE

IN the same year that "Rasselas" appeared (1759), Voltaire published his "Candide." While the coarseness and irreverent merriment of the French philosopher are quite unlike the ponderous Sunday-school didacticism of Dr. Johnson, still there are points of remarkable resemblance in these two works, written as they were by the two literary autocrats of that generation. The Happy Valley of Abyssinia finds its counterpart in El Dorado, and the object of each book was to illustrate the same truths — the uncertainties and vicissitudes of life and the vanity of human wishes, although the moral drawn from these truths is very different in the two cases.

Saintsbury considers "Candide" "from a literary point of view unsurpassable," while some of Voltaire's critics and commentators seem to regard it as scarcely worthy of notice. The truth lies somewhere between these estimates. "Candide" can hardly be classed as a novel, for it is in no sense a just portraiture of life or of human nature. It is essentially a burlesque written in ridicule of philosophic optimism, and of the orthodox contention that all which happens is the result of a wise and beneficent design. It is a work thoroughly characteristic of Voltaire, and

sparkles everywhere with his wit and laughing mockery.

Candide, the hero, is brought up in the castle of the Baron of Thunder-Ten-Tronckh, where Master Pangloss, the instructor who teaches metaphysico-theologo-cosmolo-ingology, is the oracle of the family. "It is demonstrable," says this great philosopher, "that things cannot be otherwise than they are; for as all things have been created for some end, they must necessarily be created for the best end. Observe, for instance, the nose is formed for spectacles; therefore we wear spectacles. The legs are visibly designed for stockings; accordingly we wear stockings," etc. The book is a commentary on this text. Candide is kicked out of the castle for falling in love with the baron's daughter. After sad wanderings, he is impressed by the Bulgarians, flogged nearly to death, takes part in the war with the Abares, in which some thirty thousand souls are massacred, escapes to Holland, meets the sage Pangloss, who is dying of a loathsome disease and who tells him that the castle has been destroyed and its inmates put to death. But Pangloss recovers and they start for Portugal, encountering a tempest, a shipwreck, the earthquake of Lisbon (where 30,000 people were destroyed,) and finally the Inquisition and an *auto-da-fé*, where Candide receives a hundred lashes and Pangloss is hanged. Here Candide finds that his inamorata Cunegund is alive, having escaped the slaugh-

ter at Thunder-Ten-Tronckh, though she has encountered calamities equal to his own, and though at that time the Grand Inquisitor and one Issachar, a Jew, are holding her as their prisoner and slave. Candide slays them one after the other, and escapes with his Cunegund to Cadiz, whence they set sail for Buenos Aires. But here things are as bad as in Europe. Cunegund is again torn from her lover, who, with his servant, Cacambo, wanders through Paraguay; fights with her brother the baron, who has turned Jesuit and become one of the rulers of that country; escapes again, and discovers the hitherto inaccessible and unknown country of El Dorado in the heart of the mountains, where the clay is yellow gold, the pebbles are precious stones, where there are no priests, nor monks, nor courts, nor prisons, and where the people lead lives of innocence and ideal happiness. Upon his departure he takes with him a flock of sheep laden with treasure, but as soon as he reaches the haunts of men the wickedness of the world begins again. His treasure is stolen and he returns to Europe, meeting with marvellous adventures in France, in England, in Venice, and finally in Turkey, where he again encounters his Cunegund, ransoms her from slavery, and weds her, after she has become a hideous and ill-favored scold. The sage Pangloss, although he has been hanged, dissected, enslaved and flogged, turns up again, still maintaining that everything goes on as well as possible, because as a philosopher it would be unbecoming in him to retract!

At every turn of the kaleidoscope some new scene of fraud, lust, rapine, slaughter, sacrilege, or inevitable calamity, comes into view, generally linked with some ridiculous accessory such as only the mind of Voltaire could conceive, and yet with each grotesque apparition there comes also a sort of conviction that the author has not greatly overdrawn the picture, but has merely grouped together in startling juxtaposition the things which actually happen in the world.

At last Candide settles in a small farm in the Propontis, and from a neighbor, an old man, quite ignorant of philosophy and public affairs, he learns the real secret of happiness,— to cultivate his little patch of land, and by labor to keep off the three great evils, idleness, vice, and want. The moral is thus expressed in the concluding sentences:

"'There is a concatenation of all events in the best of possible worlds; for, in short, had you not been kicked out of a fine castle for the love of Miss Cunegund, had you not been put into the Inquisition, had you not traveled over America on foot, had you not run the baron through the body, and had you not lost all your sheep which you brought from the good country of El Dorado, you would not have been here to eat preserved citrons and pistachio nuts.' 'Excellently observed,' answered Candide, 'but let us take care of our garden.'"

While the story as a whole is a wild phantasmagoria, calling to mind the works of Rabelais by its grossness and inextricable confusion, it con-

tains also, like "Gargantua," passages of exquisite irony and masterly satire. For instance, the Venetian senator Pococurante, who by despising and condemning the great works of art and literature proved his superiority to all and passed for a prodigious genius, is vividly drawn, and it makes us wonder whether Voltaire's own great reputation had not a source which was essentially the same as that of his Pococurante.

TRISTRAM SHANDY

LAURENCE STERNE

I WAS for some time in doubt whether "Tristram Shandy" ought to be in my list of masterpieces. In one sense it is hardly a work of fiction at all, for a few rather trifling incidents are made the basis of such endless digressions and ruminations that it is in fact not so much a story as a medley of satire, philosophy, and humor. But the ear-marks of Cervantes and Rabelais appear in it very plainly, and perhaps it is as much entitled to a place here as the burlesques of the celebrated Frenchman.

I began "Tristram Shandy" several times, and read the greater part of it on disconnected occasions; yet the poor hero had such a hard time, through so many hundreds of pages, in getting into the world at all, that I always gave up without reading the book to the end. And, to say the truth, nobody ought to read it consecutively. A part of the humor consists in the endless prolixity with which trifling events are narrated, and a joke thus lengthened out into the enormous dimensions of several volumes becomes too huge to handle all at once. Another part of the humor is displayed in the jumble with which the events and observations upon them are thrown together. The preface, for instance (and a very amusing

preface it is), is pitched into the middle of the book. Whole chapters are omitted and their places supplied by stars, and the subsequent chapters (which tell the whole story) are given to explaining why these omissions were made, namely, that the parts left out were too fine for the rest of the story. The author appropriately asks us, after several volumes of this confusion, how our heads feel!

The style, which is generally conversational and highly idiomatic, is sometimes purposely involved, and gives us a picturesque, vague impression, which is often vivid, though upon analysis it represents nothing in particular. Evidently Carlyle, who was a great admirer of Sterne, imitated his manner in places, though he lacked much of the wit and lightness of fancy of the author of "Tristram Shandy." There are indeed passages in which the style of the two authors is almost indistinguishable.

Naturally, in such a book a good part of the fun has to be dug out with considerable labor; and this is not always the way in which humor is most attractive. To the reader who is anxious for a *denouement,* "Tristram Shandy" is a most exasperating work, for there is no *denouement* at all. You never get anywhere, and the book ends, like the Sentimental Journey, right at the midst of perhaps the most interesting part of it.

It improves a good deal, however, upon a second reading, when you no longer care how anything is going to turn out, and when the choice

morsels are more easily extracted. It contains a great many observations which go well in a commonplace book, containing as they do a humorous epitome of matters of universal knowledge. Sterne has the Shakespearean quality of filching from others and then transforming his plunder into gold by a striking originality of his own. The actual facts described are very few. Tristram's birth, with all its accessories, his broken nose, his christening, his father's odd philosophy and scheme of education, so elaborate that the boy's actual training had to be abandoned while the father was writing his great Tristrapaedia,—these things, together with the history of Uncle Toby, wounded in the groin at the siege of Namur, and of his faithful- servant Corporal Trim, and finally the episode of the Widow Wadman, who laid siege to Uncle Toby's heart, an episode broken off in the middle at the end of the book, are pretty much all. But the descriptions of character are admirable. The dear, simple-minded, modest Uncle Toby, with his hobby, to wit: his fortifications and his military science,—Uncle Toby, who continually interrupts the emanations of Shandean philosophy by inapposite remarks, will always be a type in literature.

The coarseness of "Tristram Shandy" excludes the book from indiscriminate reading at the present time, but its coarseness, although in places very great, is, on the whole, of a rather innocent character, and the work will keep its place as a classic among the lovers of genuine humor.

It contains occasional passages of singular beauty. Witness the following.

"Time wastes too fast; every letter I trace tells me with what rapidity life follows my pen; the days and hours of it more precious, my dear Jenny, than the rubies about thy neck, are flying over our heads like light clouds of a windy day, never to return more; everything presses on,—whilst thou art twisting that lock, see! it grows gray; and every time I kiss thy hand to bid adieu, and every absence which follows it, are preludes to that eternal separation which we are shortly to make."

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

I WAS forcibly reminded of the fact that our estimate of a work of literature depends largely upon our mood and upon surrounding circumstances after my last reading of "The Vicar of Wakefield." Upon a former reading I had been filled with great admiration for Goldsmith's novel. The plot seemed admirably constructed, the characters well drawn, and the literary charm of the book inexpressibly attractive. On the subsequent perusal the work did not come up to the standard I had imagined. Both the style and the plot appeared somewhat artificial, and the combination of incidents improbable. The literary charm was there, but even that was not so great as I had supposed. I can not altogether account for this change of view. Perhaps it is due to the fact that my earlier reading was just after my perusal of "Tom Jones," and followed a certain disappointment and disgust at Fielding's work, whereas the final reading followed the perusal of Manzoni's masterpiece, "The Betrothed," by the side of which even "The Vicar of Wakefield" shines with a lustre that is somewhat dim. It is perhaps also due to the fact that the sudden alternations of fortune described in Goldsmith's novel are more startling, and therefore more attractive on a fresh

impression than they are when they are anticipated.

"The Vicar of Wakefield" begins with a delightful description of the family of the good man who tells the story,—of his wife, "chosen for the qualities that would wear well," but whose conduct, I thought, did not altogether justify such a selection; of his two daughters, Olivia and Sophia, with romantic names in which the father had no choice; and of his younger sons. Among these, he says, a family likeness prevailed, and "properly speaking, they had but one character, that of being all equally generous, credulous, simple, and inoffensive." He describes the part he took in the Whistonian controversy, maintaining that it was unlawful for a priest of the church of England, after the death of his first wife, to take another,—a controversy which led to a difference with a neighboring clergyman, Mr. Wilmot, the father of Arabella, to whom the vicar's son George was betrothed, and ended in the breaking off of the engagement, after it was also found that the vicar's fortune had been lost. Then follows a description of the removal of the family to a new parish; of the departure of George to seek his fortune; of the straightened circumstances and simple life of the others; of the love of finery displayed by the wife and daughters; of their efforts at gentility and their attempts to attract Squire Thornhill, their dissolute landlord, and to secure him as a husband for Olivia. The squire brings from London two women of abandoned

character, whom he introduces as ladies of high rank, and who seek to induce the daughters of the honest clergyman to return with them to the town.

Two attractive episodes are here introduced. In order to defray the expenses necessary to keep up appearances and to send the girls to London, the boy Moses is sent to a fair to sell the colt, and an amusing account is given of his return with a gross of worthless green spectacles, which a sharper had palmed off upon him. Then the vicar himself goes to sell the other horse, and the same man, one Ephraim Jenkinson, who appeared to be a pious and venerable gentleman, and displayed great learning about Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, Ocellus Lucanus, and the cosmogony of the world, gives him a worthless draft upon one of his neighbors in payment. These two episodes call to mind some of the adventures of Gil Blas.

Upon his return home the vicar finds that the two great ladies from London have departed, without his daughters, being dissuaded from taking them by a letter of one Mr. Burchell, a friend of the family, a gentleman in reduced circumstances, as was supposed, whose attentions to Sophia have caused her father much anxiety. A letter of Burchell is discovered, containing some dark insinuations, which are erroneously thought to apply, not to the two women, but to the vicar's own family, and great is the indignation at Burchell for his scandalous interference. Squire Thornhill continues his attentions to the vicar's eldest daughter, and is included with the family

in a huge picture, which is inadvertently made so large that it will not go into any of the rooms of the vicar's cottage, but has to stand against the kitchen wall. Instead of pressing his suit openly, however, the squire elopes with Olivia, upon whom he imposes a fictitious marriage, and then, after a time, abandons her. The poor clergyman starts upon a vain pursuit of his daughter, believing that Burchell is responsible for her abduction. In his wanderings he comes upon his son George, who is attached to a company of strolling players, and the young man gives him an account of his adventures; of his travels in Holland, whither he has gone to teach the Dutch English, without reflecting that for this purpose it was necessary that he should first learn Dutch; of his induction into the art of a connoisseur of pictures at Paris, where he learns that the whole secret of it consists in a strict adherence to two rules,— "the one, always to observe the picture might have been better if the painter had taken more pains; and the other, to praise the works of Pietro Perugino." The squire arrives during the vicar's interview with his son, and agrees to purchase for George a commission in a West India regiment, taking from the father a bond for a hundred pounds, the purchase money.

But shortly afterwards the vicar comes upon his daughter Olivia, who is in great distress, and he learns from her that it is the squire, and not Burchell, who has betrayed her. When the good man returns home he finds his dwelling in flames,

and rescues his two little boys, but is seriously burned in the conflagration, and shortly afterwards he has an altercation with the squire, who thereupon arrests him for non-payment of the hundred pounds, and throws him into jail. One of his fellow-prisoners begins to talk about cosmogony, Sanchoniathon, etc., and he recognizes the rogue Jenkinson, who now, however, becomes his friend. A simple and pathetic account is given of the scenes in the prison; of his exhortations to his fellow-prisoners to reform their evil courses; of their laughter, the pranks they play on him, and the ultimate respect and love which he awakens. So long as his daughter lives, the vicar will not seek to secure his release from prison by making his submission to the squire; but he soon learns from Jenkinson that the poor girl is dead. His second daughter, Sophia, is suddenly abducted, and George unexepectedly comes into the prison in fetters, prosecuted by the squire for sending a challenge and for injuring one of his servants. At this point the climax of human wretchedness would seem to be reached. But here everything changes. Burchell, who has just rescued Sophia and brought her back in safety, now comes upon the scene and discloses himself as the uncle of Squire Thornhill and the real owner of the estate which the young squire has been enjoying. Thornhill arrives, and his villainies are one after another unmasked. Miss Wilmot, whom he is about to marry, learns of his infidelities, renounces him, and again accepts her former

suitor, George. The squire impudently insists on keeping her fortune, according to the marriage contract, but Jenkinson now reveals the fact that Thornhill is already wedded to Olivia, since the priest who married them was a true priest, and it was he and not the girl who had been imposed upon. Olivia herself now appears; she is not dead, Jenkinson having declared that she was for the purpose of inducing the good vicar to make his submission to the squire and get out of prison. Burchell, now Sir William Thornhill, seeks the hand of Sophia, the vicar's property is restored to him, and the story concludes with two weddings and universal happiness. The conclusion is more satisfactory than that of the book of Job, to which the story bears some slight resemblance, for in Goldsmith's novel even the dead are restored to life.

It is quite evident, from the foregoing outline of the plot, that there is decidedly too much machinery in it to be altogether natural; and this artificiality, which seems characteristic rather of the age than of the author, is also found in the diction of the book, in which Johnsonian antitheses sometimes appear, although these were used by Goldsmith with more restraint and with better taste than by any other writer of the period. For instance, in the author's Advertisement, speaking of the vicar, it is said:

"He is drawn as ready to teach, and ready to obey; as simple in affluence, and majestic in adversity."

Describing the early prosperous days of the family, the vicar says:

"We had no revolutions to fear, nor fatigues to undergo; all our adventures were by the fire-side, and all our migrations from the blue bed to the brown."

Again:

"My children, the offspring of temperance, as they were educated without softness, so they were at once well-formed and healthy; my sons hardy and active, my daughters beautiful and blooming. . . . The one entertained me with her vivacity when I was gay, the other with her sense when I was serious," etc., etc.

Of course the language of the book is elegant and beautiful,— nothing that Goldsmith ever wrote was otherwise; but I think that our present era is to be congratulated upon the fact that however great its defects of style in other particulars such formalism is now mostly obsolete.

Two of the characters in the book are extremely well drawn,— the good vicar himself, with his simplicity, kindness, and religious reverence; his patience, however, on two or three occasions interrupted by most natural outbreaks of indignation; and his wife, motherly and foolish, with her shallow schemes for the advancement of her daughters.

The three poems introduced into the story,— "The Hermit," the "Elegy on a Mad Dog," and last and most beautiful of all, the verses beginning —

"When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds, too late, that men betray,"

will long be known and admired in English literature. They are models of purity and simplicity, though Goldsmith, as well as Wordsworth, sometimes comes dangerously near the line which separates that which is delicately beautiful from that which is sentimental and commonplace.

THE SORROWS OF YOUNG WERTHER

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

MANY of the lovers of Goethe will no doubt say that his longer works, "Wilhelm Meister" or "Elective Affinities," are his most important productions in the field of fiction; but it always seemed to me that, as a portrait of actual life, his earliest and simplest story is entitled to the highest rank. The first part of "Werther" is one of the most charming bits of idyllic literature extant. The character of the hero appears very clearly and naturally from his letters to his friend. He has a sensitive, impressionable, sympathetic, unaffected, lovable, and simple nature, subject to sudden transitions from joy to wretchedness. He loves children; he is interested in the lowly. To his eyes, at this time, the world and the people in it are all good. His descriptions of natural scenery are filled with a lively and poetic charm, and so, too, are his accounts of those he meets. Most attractive of all is his portrait of Charlotte, when he first sees her, cutting bread for her little brothers and sisters, then at the dance, and afterwards, on almost every page in which her name appears. The incidents of this story, except the concluding portion of it, are taken largely from the author's own experience, and Goethe, inconstant as he was in his affections,

knew not only how to love passionately, but how to describe the object of his passion as she appeared to him; and he has given us here a girl so attractive that we become enamored of the portrait. Her outbursts of merriment, her constant cheerfulness, her deep, sympathetic nature, the delicate home touches in her conduct of the household, all go to make up a character the charm of which is irresistible. But she is engaged to be married. Werther knows this from the time he has first seen her; yet, like a moth, he flits around the candle; and when Albert, her betrothed, arrives,— a character whose cool temper and sound understanding are a sharp antithesis to his own passionate and volatile nature,— life in his eyes suddenly changes. We see this even in the changing views with which he regards Nature. The universe, instead of being the source of universal joy, has grown to be a fearful monster, forever devouring its own offspring. His buoyant spirits become depressed; he broods over the one thought of his love for Charlotte, until he resolves to flee. He takes service under an ambassador, whom he describes as "the most punctilious blockhead under heaven." He writes with utter contempt of the hollow society by which he is surrounded, with its meaningless gradations; and when at last he inadvertently remains at a reception at which his rank does not entitle him to be present, and is asked to leave, whereupon scandal arises, he resigns his place in disgust.

In the meantime, Albert and Charlotte have

become married, but the one great passion of Werther's life brings him back to her. He recognizes his folly, but he can not resist it. His thoughts circle around her alone, and his imaginations become morbid and feverish. "If Albert should die!" "How much better fitted am I to be her husband!" Her pity for him, and the tenderness with which she treats his hopeless passion, inflame him all the more.

Werther's letters to his friend are now interrupted, and the editor fills in the gaps with a narrative and observations of his own. Werther becomes gloomy, morose, unbalanced, and finally resolves upon suicide. Charlotte asks him not to visit her, but in spite of this he goes, and reads to her some melancholy passages from Ossian, not very apposite in the facts they describe, but quite in tune with his feelings in their mournful and melancholy character. When he sees her sympathy with his affliction, a passionate outbreak ensues, and she parts from him, declaring that she can never see him again. He wanders distraught at night over the crags, and, returning home, makes his preparations for death. He sends to Albert, asking to borrow his pistols for a journey. Albert directs Charlotte to give them to the messenger, which she does. A long letter from Werther to Charlotte and a simple description of the final catastrophe end the narrative.

There is a great inconsistency between Werther's character as it appears in the last part of the book and that shown by his earlier letters,

an inconsistency which it seems to me is not wholly due to the transformation in his feelings caused by his hopeless love. The last letter which Werther writes to Charlotte is of a most compromising character, telling her that he knows she loves him, and that she is to be his in that curious future world which he pictures to himself, where it would seem that passion rather than virtue is to be rewarded. He insists on describing the harrowing details of his contemplated suicide, reminding her that it is from her hand that he has received the pistol, and throwing upon her the responsibility, all this accompanied by the most tender endearments. Is this love? Is it even a tolerable form of insanity? It may be said that no course of action is unreasonable for a madman, yet to me the final pages seem inartistic. In this part of the book the author evidently had to rely upon his unaided imagination rather than upon the memory of his own experience, and Werther's frame of mind after he had resolved upon suicide is one which I think Goethe had felt very imperfectly in his own consciousness.

But whatever the incongruities of the story so far as the hero is concerned, it must be said that fiction has rarely, if ever, drawn a character more womanly, in the best sense of the word, than Charlotte. She is one of the most attractive types in literature.

PAUL AND VIRGINIA

BERNARDIN DE ST. PIERRE

WERE it not for the immense reputation of "Paul and Virginia," a reputation which has lasted for more than a century, that book should find no place in a list of the great works of fiction.

Saint Pierre considered his work a picture of nature, a sort of prose pastoral, modelled after Theocritus; but to many it will seem rather the picture of a counterfeit or fiat nature, which was greatly in vogue at the time in an extremely artificial society and among those who had little knowledge of the genuine article. I do not mean by this to criticise the author's description of natural scenery or natural phenomena. His picture of the Isle-de-France, and of the surroundings of the little cabins in which the events of the story occur, is beautiful and lifelike; his account of the hurricane in which Virginia perishes is realistic, and impressive; but his portrait of what human life would be in a condition of Arcadian simplicity is far from convincing. The author tells us in his preface that he intends to show that our happiness consists in living according to nature and virtue. When a definite thesis is thus proposed at the outset, the truthfulness of the portrait may easily be over-

looked and the *dramatis personae* may even become impossibilities.

Here are two amiable children who grow up together in two neighboring cabins "according to nature,"— that is, they can not read and write,— and yet they devote themselves to amateur theatricals and to landscape gardening. In decorating the tropical surroundings of their humble homes they make these almost as artificial as the park of Versailles. The names which they give to the choice spots are stilted and unnatural. A certain rock is called "The Discovery of Friendship." A circle of orange trees and bananas around a small grass-plat, where Paul and Virginia go and dance, is called "Concord." Another tree where their respective mothers meet to tell their griefs is christened "Tears Wiped Away." A neighboring hermit (the man who afterwards tells the story) scatters appropriate Latin verses in divers other localities.

Nothing that is planted ever seems to fail. The flowers are abundant, but somehow they seem like manufactured flowers. Even their perfume suggests rather the pharmacy than the field, and we see nothing of any thorns.

A few of the scenes between Paul and Virginia are natural and beautiful. Perhaps the best part of the story is the description of the shy maidenly reserve which takes the place of childish affection when the girl first becomes a woman. But the bulk of the book is filled with a curious mixture of sickly sentimentality, long Sunday-school homi-

lies, and a very commonplace philosophy. The climax is reached after Virginia, who has been sent to France to be educated by her aunt, returns to the island and perishes with the ship which is wrecked by a hurricane upon the shore. This occurs under the eyes of her lover, who makes heroic but ineffectual efforts to rescue her. According to the curiously devised plot of the author, she could escape by swimming from the sinking ship if she would accept the proffered aid of a sailor and consent to divest herself of her clothing, but her modesty is greater than her love of life. She turns away, lifts her eyes to heaven, and with appropriate gestures goes down with the ship. This may be impressive to the Gallic mind, but to many a hard-headed Anglo-Saxon it will look like rubbish. The book ends with a description of the grief of her lover, in spite of enormous doses of consolation ineffectually administered to him by a friend, and finally with the death of pretty much everybody concerned, all from broken hearts, and in a very short space of time. Thus is demonstrated the happiness which is sure to reward those who keep close to nature.

We are told that the events recorded actually occurred. It may be that the skeleton of the story is founded upon fact, but if so, I feel sure that the flesh and blood with which the imagination of the author has clothed it is quite different from that which it actually possessed.

ATALA

FRANCOIS CHATEAUBRIAND

I HEAR that not long ago, as the result of an extensive vote taken among the subscribers of a leading French periodical, it was found that Chateaubriand was the most popular of all French writers of fiction of the present century. Certainly this is a surprising result when such names as Balzac, Hugo, and Daudet are considered as competitors, and one's first impression is that those who gave their suffrages in favor of Chateaubriand must have been sentimental rather than judicious readers.

And yet a careful perusal of "Atala," the short romance by which Chateaubriand won his literary spurs, will perhaps give the author a higher rank in fiction than is generally accorded to him by our colder and less impressionable race. The plot is simplicity itself. Atala is an Indian maiden, although a Christian, and is supposed to be the daughter of Simaghan the chief. Her real father, however, is Lopez, a Spaniard. Her mother before her death required from her a vow of perpetual celibacy. Chactas, a young brave of the tribe of the Natchez, who has lived among the Spaniards at St. Augustine, is captured by Simaghan and is to be burned alive. Atala releases him from his bonds, they flee together, and

wander long through the forest. Their love is so great that Atala, fearing she would break her vow, takes poison and dies under the care of the good Father Aubry, a missionary, who administers the last consolations of religion.

This story has been called an epic in prose, but its predominant feature is hardly the heroic. It is rather a pastoral, if that word can be applied to a description of primitive life where there are neither flocks nor shepherds. "Atala" follows somewhat the same lines as "Paul and Virginia," and although it is supposed to contain incongruities in attributing the qualities of civilization to savages, yet perhaps Chateaubriand, who had had considerable personal experience with American Indians, may not have been so wide of the mark as we think. Moreover, Atala was part Spaniard; Chactas had been brought up among the whites, and the counterpart of the old priest actually existed in Jogues the Jesuit father. And if it were not so, why may not the poet create such children of his fancy as he will, and give them what garb and conversation and surroundings he may please, so long as they are really human and beautiful? Atala is certainly an interesting and natural character, the consolations of the priest are filled with tender pathos, the style of the book is simple yet highly poetical, and there are descriptions of nature — of the forest, the mountains, the storm — of great beauty and vividness, — pictures that sometimes make us wish to betake ourselves to the wilderness.

The moralizing of Chateaubriand is by no means so tedious as that of St. Pierre, and there is nothing in Atala so essentially devoid of common sense as the conduct of the artificial creatures who have been "living according to Nature," in the Ile de France.

Let us say, then, that Chateaubriand, if not preëminent, is entitled to an honorable rank among the masters of fiction.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

JANE AUSTEN

THE narrow horizon of Jane Austen's life was perhaps one of the reasons why her perception of human nature was so keen and accurate in the matters which fell under her observation. Her novels contain no extraordinary types nor incidents, but she makes the most of the average and the commonplace, which become more than usually interesting under her treatment. He who reads "Pride and Prejudice" will get a faithful picture, not only of English country life, but of a great deal that belongs to life everywhere. None of the characters are exaggerated; they are entirely human and natural. The conversation is not too brilliant to be lifelike. When bright things are said they are introduced in a spontaneous and almost inevitable manner. All through the book we recognize in the author a quiet yet acute observer of actual occurrences, who has culled largely from her own recollection many of the most attractive incidents and has grouped them together with simple yet effective art. The satire is so unobtrusive that sometimes it appears unconscious.

The Bennet household is well described. "Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humor, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient

to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news."

And again: "Her husband was very little otherwise indebted to her than as her ignorance and folly contributed to his amusement. This is not the sort of happiness which a man would in general wish to owe to his wife, but where other powers of entertainment are wanting, the true philosopher will derive benefit from such as are given."

There are five daughters in the family, whose characters are excellently set off by comparison with one another,— Jane, the eldest, beautiful, gracious, kindly, sweet-tempered, always believing the best of everybody; Elizabeth, high-spirited, brilliant, and decidedly the most attractive, although by no means so charitable as her sister in her judgment of others. The three other sisters, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia, are as empty-headed as their mother. Lydia, the youngest, in particular, is a wild, giddy girl, continually running after the officers with their fine coats.

The book deals with a society where woman's sole resource is matrimony, and through the entire story there runs a great deal of talk of catching a husband, and of schemes for this purpose. The silly Mrs. Bennet flings her daughters, in the most transparent way, first at one man and then another,

much to the mortification of Jane and Elizabeth.

It appears that Mr. Bingley, a young, unmarried, and wealthy gentleman, has recently taken the estate of Netherfield, and moves into the neighborhood, bringing with him his two sisters, women of selfish and supercilious character. His friend Darcy, the proprietor of the large estate of Pemberly, in Derbyshire, also accompanies him. The book opens with the following sentence:

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters."

The partiality of Bingley for Jane is soon apparent, but the young man is hurried away from Netherfield by his sisters and his friend Darcy, who desires to preserve him from an undesirable connection. By mutual misunderstandings Jane and he are kept apart until near the close of the book, and the main interest in the story centers around Darcy and Elizabeth. Darcy's manner is proud, cold, and disagreeable, and Elizabeth resents his conduct in a lively and spirited fashion, which renders her all the more attractive in his eyes. She hears, however, from Wickham, a young officer in the militia, of his evil conduct in disregarding his father's wishes and depriving this companion of his boyhood of a living, which he

had been recommended by his father's will to bestow upon Wickham.

Mr. Collins, a young clergyman who has inherited by entail the reversion of Longbourn, the Bennet property, visits the Bennet household, resolving to marry one of the daughters — any one of them will do; and on learning that Jane is likely to be disposed of, he at once transfers his suit to Elizabeth. He is a formal, pompous, ridiculous toady, filled with great awe of his patroness, Lady Catherine De Bourgh. The manner in which he pays his addresses to Elizabeth is related with delightful particularity:

"'Almost as soon as I entered the house,' [he says], 'I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But, before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying — and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did.'

"The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing, that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him further, and he continued:

"'My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish; secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly — which, perhaps, I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honor of calling patroness. Twice has she

condescended to give me her opinion (unasked, too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford — between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss De Bourgh's footstool — that she said, "Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman, for *my* sake; and for your *own,* let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her." Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe; and your wit and vivacity I think must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favor of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighborhood, where, I assure you, there are many amiable young women. But, the fact is, that being as I am to inherit this estate after the death of your honored father, (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place — which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now, nothing remains for me but to assure you, in the most animated language, of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on

your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents., which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.'

"It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

"'You are too hasty, sir,' she cried. 'You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honor of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them.'

"'I am not now to learn,' replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, 'that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favor; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long.'

"'Upon my word, sir,' cried Elizabeth, 'your hope is rather an extraordinary one, after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation.'

. . . . . .

"'You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear

cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely a thing of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these: — It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favor; and you should take it into further consideration that, in spite of your manifold attractions it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small, that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females.'

"'I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honor you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart.'

"'You are uniformly charming!' cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; 'and I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable.'

"To such perseverance in wilful self-deception, Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew; determined, that if he persisted in considering

her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behavior at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female."

But after Collins is persuaded that he is rejected by Elizabeth, he at once makes suit to her friend, Charlotte Lucas, and Charlotte, who has an eye to the main chance, snaps up the foolish clergyman with little ceremony, and, like many another woman under similar circumstances, manages him adroitly and bears patiently and cheerfully her dull life with him at the parsonage.

Elizabeth, while on a visit to her friend at this place, again sees Darcy on several occasions. His manners are constrained; she dislikes him heartily; and it is with the utmost surprise that she listens at last to a confession of love, in which he declares that he has struggled vainly, that his feelings will not be repressed, and in which he speaks most inappropriately of his sense of her inferiority, of the marriage being a degradation, and of the family obstacles which judgment has always opposed to his inclination. She rejects him with indignation, and reproaches him for separating his friend Bingley from her sister, and for his unjust treatment of Wickham. He on his part is astounded at her refusal, and the next morning places in her hand a letter, explaining, with great candor and rather brutal frankness, his motives for his action, and justifying very fully his treat-

ment of Wickham, whose bad character is clearly shown.

It is not long before Wickham elopes with the foolish Lydia, and lives with her in hiding in London, but refuses to marry her. Darcy, without the knowledge of any of the Bennet household, sets about to discover the fugitives, and finally persuades Wickham to marry the girl, to whom he gives a portion sufficient to make her an object of attraction to her unprincipled lover.

These two characters, Darcy and Wickham, are not clearly described when they are first introduced to us, and Elizabeth, the heroine, though she is generally a shrewd observer, makes a serious mistake in estimating their respective merits, a mistake that we would be very likely to make ourselves under the same circumstances.

In the later chapters of the book Darcy overcomes his pride, and Elizabeth her prejudice, Bingley and Jane are again brought together, and the marriages of the two couples form a fitting conclusion for the novel.

Perhaps the character of the Lady Catherine de Bourgh is the most graphically drawn of any in the book. Her rank, her wealth, and her arrogance make her the general adviser of the inferior race of mortals whom she deigns to notice. She criticises every household but her own, resents the expression of an opinion by any one except herself, points out the mistakes of everyone else at the card tables, constantly relates anecdotes of her personal experience, determines what the

weather is to be next day, finds fault with the employments of her neighbors and the arrangement of their furniture, detects their housemaids in negligence, impresses upon the young women of her acquaintance that they will never play well unless they practice more, etc., etc., etc. All her hospitality is attended by intolerable dullness and ill-breeding. Her interview with Elizabeth, in which she insolently directs that young woman not to marry Darcy, because she has selected him for her own daughter, is drawn with a masterly hand, and, as might be expected, her conduct turns out to be the very means of reconciliation between those she would keep apart.

In the following letter of condolence sent by Mr. Collins to Lydia's father, after her elopement became known, the nature of the reverend clergyman appears, unconsciously painted by his own hand far better than it could be characterized by others:

"'*My dear Sir*:

"'I feel myself called upon, by our relationship, and my situation in life, to condole with you on the grievous affliction you are now suffering under, of which we were yesterday informed by a letter from Hertfordshire. Be assured, my dear sir, that Mrs. Collins and myself sincerely sympathize with you, and all your respectable family, in your present distress, which must be of the bitterest kind, because proceeding from a cause which no time can remove. No arguments shall be wanting, on my part, that can alleviate so severe a misfortune; or that may comfort you under a circumstance that must be of

all others most afflicting to a parent's mind. The death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison to this. And it is the more to be lamented, because there is reason to suppose, as my dear Charlotte informs me, that this licentiousness of behavior in your daughter has proceeded from a faulty degree of indulgence; though, at the same time, for the consolation of yourself and Mrs. Bennet, I am inclined to think that her own disposition must be naturally bad, or she could not be guilty of such an enormity, at so early an age. Howsoever that may be, you are grievously to be pitied, in which opinion I am not only joined by Mrs. Collins, but, likewise, by Lady Catherine and her daughter, to whom I have related the affair. They agree with me in apprehending that this false step in one daughter will be injurious to the fortunes of all the others, for who, as Lady Catherine herself condescendingly says, will connect themselves with such a family? And this consideration leads me, moreover, to reflect with augmented satisfaction on a certain event of last November; for had it been otherwise, I must have been involved in all your sorrows and disgrace. Let me advise you, then, my dear sir, to console yourself as much as possible, to throw off your unworthy child from your affection forever, and leave her to reap the fruits of her own heinous offence.'

"'I am, dear sir, &c., &c.'"

While "Pride and Prejudice" is not a book of absorbing interest, it is a very faithful portraiture of life, and a quiet and effective satire on some of the commonest foibles of mankind.

UNDINE

DE LA MOTTE FOUQUE

THE fairy world holds among its enchantments no more gracious figure than Undine, whose simple story is filled with unutterable pathos and tenderness.

The Knight Huldbrand meets her in the guise of a young girl at the cottage of a fisherman by whom she had been brought up as a daughter. Beautiful, wayward, mischievous, she falls in love with the handsome knight and testifies her fondness by mad pranks as well as by artless caresses. After they are married Huldbrand learns for the first time that his bride is a water-sprite, belonging to a race more beautiful than mankind, but devoid of an immortal soul, which can be acquired only by marriage with some human being. A great change now comes over Undine; for with her new soul there comes to her all that depth of feeling and suffering which the possession of the priceless gift implies. The scene in which she first reveals to her husband her real nature and tremblingly awaits her destiny at his hands is beautiful in the extreme. The married pair take their departure from the cottage and proceed through the enchanted forest on their way to Huldbrand's castle at Ringstetten. The water-sprite Kühleborn, the kinsman of Undine, who besets

their pathway here and elsewhere and who dissolves into a mountain torrent, is described with that vagueness which is the charm of the supernatural. On the way to Ringstetten, Undine, moved with pity for the proud and imperious Bertalda, who has been cast off by the duke of the country for her unworthiness, takes her home and receives her as a companion and friend. Gradually the love of Huldbrand for his wife wanes, and he becomes enamored of Bertalda; and while Undine's kinsfolk, the water-sprites, seek to revenge the slights she is compelled to suffer, yet the poor wife, with loving self-sacrifice, protects not only her husband but even her rival from their power. At last, while sailing on the Danube, Huldbrand loads his wife with curses and imprecations, and she is compelled to leave him and join her kindred in the river below. And when, after his marriage with Bertalda, she is required to come back to the castle and be his executioner, she lovingly performs her terrible office with a kiss.

There are some imperfections and inconsistencies in the story, as perhaps there must be in all tales dealing with the supernatural, but the traits which come to this fair creature with the soul bestowed upon her at her wedding, the gentleness, the self-sacrifice and submissive love, are drawn by the hand of a master and painted in colors which genius alone can impart to the creations of fancy.

PETER SCHLEMIHL

ADELBERT CHAMISSO

A GERMAN critic of considerable authority speaks of "Peter Schlemihl" as "a faultless work of art, and one of deep import." It is not necessary to concur in this estimate nor to imagine, as some do, that the shadowless man was a symbol of the author, "a wanderer without a country," in order to give the book a reasonably high place in literature. No doubt there are autobiographical features in the story, but Chamisso's own account of its simple genesis is evidently the true one. "I had lost," he said, "upon a journey, my hat, portmanteau, gloves, pocket-handkerchief, and my entire travelling outfit. Fouqué asked me if I had not also lost my shadow, and we pictured this misfortune to ourselves." Something out of La Fontaine furnished another incident, and the book was written largely to amuse the children of the author's friend Hilzig. It is a sort of fairy story dealing largely with the supernatural.

At the garden of a rich gentleman to whom he has brought a letter of introduction, Peter Schlemihl meets a quiet man dressed in gray, who, when anything is desired by the guests, at once takes it out of his pocket. A piece of court plaster, a telescope, a Turkish carpet, a tent, and finally a horse saddled and bridled, are successively pro-

duced without anyone showing surprise at these remarkable proceedings or even seeming to know who the stranger is. When Schlemihl retires from the company the gray man follows him and offers him the inexhaustible purse of Fortunatus in exchange for his shadow. Schlemihl, poor man, thinking it a small thing to part with at such a price, sells this humble attendant to the devil, and the rest of the book sets forth the calamities that follow — the pity of the old women, the outcry of the children, the contempt of the men, especially the stout ones who have broad shadows of their own. Schlemihl tries to keep in the shade, shuts himself up in his room with his gold, proposes to have a shadow painted, sends his faithful servant Bendel to get his own back from the gray man, but all in vain. The stranger promises, however, to return "in a year and a day."

All the splendor procured by Schlemihl's wealth is as nothing by the side of the evil fate entailed by the loss of his shadow. He is especially unfortunate in love. At first Fanny smiles upon his suit, but falls senseless when the moon rises and casts only a single shadow as the two sit side by side. Then, when he flees to another country, where the people take him for a king and he wins sweet Mina's heart, his secret is betrayed by Rascal, one of his own hirelings, who robs him at once both of his money and his intended bride.

At the end of the year and the day the gray man appears and offers him back his shadow if he will only subscribe a little obligation to surrender to

the bearer his soul after its separation from his body. The argument is cogent. "What sort of a thing is your soul? Have you ever seen it, and what do you think you can do with it after you are dead?" But this time the voice of the tempter is unavailing, for although at first Peter is on the point of yielding when tortured by the sight of his weeping Mina about to be consigned to the arms of the hated Rascal, yet a friendly unconsciousness overcomes him and the contract is not signed.

The poor unfortunate again rides forth into the world, followed by the man in gray, until at last Schlemihl in despair flings away the purse, whereupon his evil spirit departs, leaving him free and light-hearted, although poor as well as shadowless and alone in the world.

He now avoids human society, and having become possessed of a pair of seven-league boots he is astonished to find himself striding over immense tracts of territory in an incredibly short space of time. Now he first clearly sees his appointed destiny. Shut out from the society of his fellows, nature is to be his compensation. The earth is given to him as a rich garden, and science is to be the purpose of his life. He naturally has facilities for investigation possessed by no one else. He strides through all parts of both continents, passing across Behring Straits from Asia to America, but he deplores the fact that New Holland and other islands of the Pacific are still inaccessible to him, and he gazes from the utmost point of land which his seven-league boots will permit

him to reach, to the unattainable regions beyond the sea, and deems himself as badly off as if he were still behind the bars of a prison, oppressed as he is with the terrible consciousness that his great work on natural history, embracing only the flora and fauna of the two continents, must still remain a fragment.

He chooses for his hermitage a cave in the Thebais, and when we leave him he is still engaged in the preparation of his great work.

There is an inexhaustible fund of humor in the story. The various excuses given by Schlemihl for the loss of his shadow are certainly grotesque. One was that when he was travelling in Russia it froze so hard that the shadow stuck to the ground; another that a rough man walked so rudely into the shadow that he tore a hole in it and it was sent out to be mended. Another excuse was that it disappeared during a long sickness, with the hair and nails of the hero, and while hair and nails had been restored, the shadow had never come back.

"Peter Schlemihl" is written in a charming style. The vocabulary and the diction are extremely simple. This is perhaps due to the fact that the book was intended for a child's story, but still more, I think, to the fact that Chamisso being by birth a Frenchman, his diction has something in it of the clear and luminous character of French prose.

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

WASHINGTON IRVING

AS in painting it is not the huge canvas but the miniature which is most finished and delicate in detail, so in American fiction it is a short story of the simplest type, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," which furnishes perhaps the choicest illustration of the perfection of literary handiwork.

The incidents of the tale are meager; the characters are very few. Ichabod Crane, the Yankee schoolmaster, is pretty much all. But with what a master hand are drawn the few lines that portray his grotesque personality! "He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small and flat on top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weather-cock perched on his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius of famine descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow escaped from a cornfield."

In the matter of style, this little sketch is as near perfection as it is possible to come. The

landscape pictures are so life-like that the reader is flushed by the opulence of the autumn harvests "in which the birds were taking their farewell banquets," or hushed by the calm brooding over the Tappan Zee, while the schoolmaster jogs along upon his ancient nag to lay siege to the heart and the inheritance of the fair Katrina Van Tassel. The crullers and doughnuts on the table of the Dutch farmer inspire an appetite in the reader almost as keen as that of the pedagogue; and the final catastrophe, when, after the rejection of his suit, the trembling Ichabod falls a victim to the Headless Horseman, overthrown by the pumpkin hurled from the hands of the irreverent Brom Bones, is a climax worthy of the humor of Cervantes himself. Indeed, there are strong grounds for believing that Don Quixote was the model of the lank pedagogue, who, whether he bestrides Gunpowder, or delves in the lore of ghosts and hobgoblins, or shakes himself to pieces in the dance, irresistibly calls to mind the peerless knight of La Mancha. But whether or not Irving borrowed the lay figure from another, he has moulded the cast upon it so perfectly that Ichabod is all his own.

IVANHOE

WALTER SCOTT

THE novelist who puts the scene of his story in a place and a time far removed from his own has perhaps this advantage, that he offers to his reader scenes that have the charm of strangeness and novelty; but he suffers from a serious drawback,— he can never interpret the thoughts and conduct of his characters with the same truthfulness, nor in quite the same lively manner as if they were familiar to him by daily contact. For the human interest of his drama he has to rely not so much upon temporary or local characteristics as upon those which are common to all periods and all communities. Indeed, if there be any local color, it is apt to be that of the author's own surroundings rather than of those in which the story is laid.

In "Ivanhoe," Scott sought to reproduce the period of Richard I, and perhaps the reproduction is as life-like as any that could be made, where the materials are so scanty. The novel belongs distinctly to the romantic school, and contains all the usual ingredients of books of chivalry,— knights errant, heroes in disguise, prodigies of valor, maidens in distress, a foul ravisher, a wandering monarch, a drinking friar, etc. These things are pruned of their most evident absurdities, but the

story is still quite far removed from probability. The plot is palpably a creation of imaginative architecture, resembling some well proportioned temple or villa, rather than the product of natural development like a landscape or like life itself. In places the author invokes the Saxon Chronicle and other authorities in proof of the credibility of his narrative, but these references themselves show that he is not unconscious of the fact that his story stands in need of extraneous support.

And yet, this artificiality being once conceded, how beautiful is the structure! How fine the material, and how symmetrically it is put together! Sometimes, perhaps, the narrative lags a little; sometimes the descriptions, like those of Cedric's hall or Athelstane's castle, are longer than the impatience of the reader cares to tolerate. Yet the great scenes of the drama, how vividly do all these stand forth in our memory! How splendid the stage setting and how well arranged the incidents!

The story opens quietly. Gurth, the swineherd, and Wamba, the jester of Cedric the Saxon, are driving home a herd of swine, when they are overtaken by Prior Aymer and the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert with their train. Then follows the supper scene at Rotherwood, the residence of Cedric, where Ivanhoe, disguised as a wandering palmer, returned from Palestine, visits his father's home, answers the boasting taunts of the Templar, saves the poor Jew, Isaac of York, and is supplied with armor for the coming tourney.

Next follows one of the most celebrated scenes in literature, the description of the passage at arms at Ashby, in which Ivanhoe, as the "Disinherited Knight," vanquishes all antagonists and names Rowena, Cedric's ward, as queen of love and beauty, and where, in the *melée* on the second day, the "Black Sluggard," another unknown knight, turns the fortunes of the fray against the Templar.

Perhaps even more admirably constructed are the scenes which follow,— the capture of Cedric, Rowena, Athelstane, Isaac and his daughter Rebecca, by the Norman nobles, and their imprisonment in the castle of Front-de-Boeuf, where they are separated from each other, and where the events which take place simultaneously in different parts of the castle are narrated with great vividness and power. While Cedric and Athelstane are held for ransom, Front-de-Boeuf seeks to extort a vast sum of money from poor Isaac by preparing to roast him alive; De Bracy, a Norman noble, demands the hand of Rowena as the price of her safety and that of Ivanhoe; and the Templar besets Rebecca with his amorous importunities until she prepares to fling herself from the parapet to escape his violence. The interruption of these scenes by a bugle call from without, the demand for the release of the captives made by Wamba, Gurth, the Black Knight, and Locksley, captain of the outlaws, followed by the siege and burning of the castle, constitute perhaps the climax of the story, and are even more impressive than its third

great scene, the trial of Rebecca for sorcery, and her deliverance by Ivanhoe, who appears as her champion at the last moment.

Certain episodes are almost as attractive as the main thread of the narrative. For instance, the drinking bout between Friar Tuck and the Black Knight (who turns out to be King Richard) in the chapel in the forest.

There are improbabilities in this work which show us very clearly that it is a creation of the imagination rather than a transcript of observations from actual life. Take, for instance, the conversation between Brian de Bois-Guilbert and the captive Rebecca in the castle. It is safe to say that no knight, however profligate, ever began a love-suit to a maiden with a satirical reminder that her father was then being tortured for money in another part of the castle, in such words as the following:

"Know, bright lily of the vale of Baca, that thy father is already in the hands of a powerful alchemist, who knows how to convert into gold and silver even the rusty bars of a dungeon grate. The venerable Isaac is subjected to an alembic, which will distill from him all he holds dear, without any assistance from my requests or thy entreaty. Thy ransom must be paid by love and beauty, and in no other coin will I accept it."

And yet, in spite of such defects, the heroism displayed by Rebecca in this particular scene has made it one of the most attractive in the entire story. Rebecca is indeed one of the noblest char-

acters in fiction, and the portrait is natural and human, as well as heroic. Although she was delivered from the stake by her champion, the story ends sadly for her, since the knight whom she loves has become the husband of Rowena. Scott tells us in his preface that he has been censured for this, but he adds, with admirable taste, that he thinks that a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity.

But to my mind the most attractive person in the book is Wamba, the jester. He appears to me in many ways a close imitation of some of Shakespeare's clowns. His jests are on an average quite as good, and he everywhere awakens our liveliest interest and sympathy, from the hour when he interposes his shield of brawn in front of the Jew at the tournament until the time when he exchanges repartees and songs with the Black Knight on their way through the forest. There is, moreover a strain of pathos in his merriment, and when he enters the castle of Front-de-Boeuf, disguised as a monk, and exchanges his garments with his master, remaining within the castle in expectation of death, the gibes with which he accompanies his sacrifice give to his character something very human, lovable, and withal heroic. Even Shakespeare has hardly given us a better clown.

The resuscitation and the appearance of the Saxon noble Athelstane at his own funeral feast is far from artistic. Scott himself calls it a *tour*

de force, and says he put it in at the vehement entreaties of his friend and printer, who was inconsolable at the Saxon being conveyed to the tomb, — an example which ought to be a warning to authors to follow their own judgment rather than that of their friends.

In the crucible of Scott's imagination moral qualities are sometimes fused together in such manner that the original ingredients are quite undiscernible. Robin Hood and his outlaws become generous heroes, and Friar Tuck, who is in reality a dissolute and hypocritical monk, becomes amiable and attractive. Indeed, this great writer of romance is filled with such ever present optimism and love of honorable qualities, that it is almost impossible for him to draw the picture of a really detestable man. His novels offer the strongest possible contrast to the pessimistic realism of some of the more recent works of fiction.

Men may differ in their estimates of Ivanhoe as a picture of human life and character, but they can hardly differ in their estimate of it as a beautiful piece of poetic imagination.

THE BETROTHED

ALESSANDRO MANZONI

"THE Betrothed," by Manzoni, has not received at the hands of the English or American public that wide celebrity or high rank which it deserves. It is a very great novel. Excepting only "Don Quixote," and some of the masterpieces of Thackeray, I know of nothing more excellent in the whole range of fiction. There is no artificiality, no sensationalism, no straining after effect; but the story proceeds naturally and even quietly through events of great historic as well as tragic interest, to its consummation.

The scene opens at a village on the shores of the lake of Como, on an occasion when Don Abbondio, the curate of the parish, is stopped on his way home by two "bravoes" of Don Rodrigo, a nobleman of the locality, and warned, upon pain of death, not to celebrate the marriage of Renzo Tramaglino and Lucia Mondella, which had been fixed for the following day. The scene is a very vivid one, and the terror of Don Abbondio is set forth in the liveliest manner. He is also warned not to disclose the warning; "It will be the same as marrying them," says the bravo. But the poor priest is a leaky vessel, and when he grumbles and complains to his housekeeper Perpetua,

he can not refrain from relating to her the awful threat. Dreadful are his dreams that night of "bravoes, Don Rodrigo, Renzo, cries, muskets"; and on the next day, when he makes blundering excuses to the bridegroom and tries to overwhelm him with Latin quotations which he can not understand, the truth all comes out, for Perpetua has talked with Renzo about "overbearing tyrants," and Renzo at last worms the story, and even the name of the "tyrant," out of the frightened priest.

But the wedding is stopped, and Renzo betakes himself to Dr. Azzecca Garbugli, learned in the law, who treats him encouragingly and confidentially, so long as he thinks he has only a malefactor to defend, quoting terrible edicts with the comforting assurance that he can get him off, until he learns that Renzo has come, not to defeat but to seek justice, and that too against the powerful Don Rodrigo. Then he sends the poor fellow away, and will hear nothing in justification of his suit.

But the unfortunate lovers have a friend in the person of Father Cristoforo, a monk, who in his early life had killed a man in a rage, and devoted the remainder of his days to the humility and repentance of the cloister. He takes it upon himself to visit Don Rodrigo, and in earnest and indignant words remonstrates with the abandoned nobleman, but he is ordered from the house.

And now Agnese, the gossiping mother of Lucia, proposes to accomplish the marriage by craft.

The lovers are to make a declaration before the curate in the presence of witnesses. This, it seems, was a method recognized by law. Renzo undertakes his preparations for the scheme; gains access to Don Abbondio's house through a friend, who comes under pretense of paying rent; but just as they are making the mutual declaration they are interrupted by a great outcry on the part of Don Abbondio, who throws the tablecloth over Lucia's face and stops the proceedings.

That same night Don Rodrigo has sent his bravoes to abduct Lucia. They steal into the house, but find it empty, and are suddenly startled by the ringing of the bell, which has followed the outcry of Don Abbondio. "Each of the villains seems to hear in these peals his name, surname, and nickname," and they flee in consternation, while the betrothed betake themselves to the convent of Father Cristoforo, at Pescarenico; and the tumult aroused in the village by these events, admirably pictured by the novelist, at length subsides.

Father Cristoforo sends Renzo to Milan, and the women to a convent at Monza, where Lucia is to find refuge with "the Signora," a nun of high rank, who has been compelled by her father to assume the veil. The Signora is proud, passionate, unreconciled. Her history, and the schemes by which her consent to a monastic life had been extorted by alternate persecutions and flatteries, are skillfully delineated, as well as her intrigue with Egidio, an abandoned man, living in a house ad-

joining the convent, which intrigue is followed by the mysterious disappearance of a lay sister who has discovered the crime. But "the Signora" now rejoices at the opportunity of thus sheltering an innocent creature like Lucia, whom she takes under her protection.

Renzo reaches Milan at the time of the breaking out of the bread riots, due to the prevailing famine. The looting and destruction of one of the bake-houses is vividly described, and also the attack upon the superintendent of provisions. Renzo can not keep out of these exciting scenes, and becomes quite a hero, making a speech to the crowd, innocent enough in purpose, but easily construed into sedition by a secret agent of the government who hears it, attaches himself to Renzo, acts as his guide to an inn in the neighborhood, where the innocent young man unlawfully refuses to give his name to the inn-keeper, but unwittingly reveals it to his guide; then goes to bed intoxicated, is arrested next morning, escapes from the officers of justice in the midst of the crowd, flees from the city, and does not stop until he has quit the duchy of Milan, crossed the Adda, and taken refuge with his cousin Bortolo in the Bergamascan territory — all of which is followed by proceedings declaring him a dangerous outlaw,— luckily, however, after he is well out of reach.

Through the intrigues of Don Rodrigo, the monk Cristoforo is sent away to Rimini, and the nobleman now betakes himself to the castle of a great lord, whose name is not given, so dreadful

were the crimes he was said to have committed. The Unnamed took upon himself the task of kidnapping Lucia from the convent, and for this purpose availed himself of Egidio, who compelled the Signora to betray the girl committed to her keeping and to send Lucia on a pretended message, to be seized, thrown into a carriage, and driven to that lair of robbers, the castle of the Unnamed. But so great are her sufferings, so moving her piteous appeals, that even the heart of the outlaw is touched, and he falters in his desperate scheme. Lucia in her agony prays to the Madonna for deliverance, and, resolving to sacrifice what she holds most dear, she determines to give up her beloved Renzo, and vows to remain a virgin.

A fine description is given of the remorse which steals over the conscience of the desperate malefactor, his despair at the contemplation of a career which is now drawing near its close, with its inevitable termination, and the thought, "If there should really be another life!" He hears again the piteous words of Lucia when she besought him to set her free, "God pardons so many sins for one deed of mercy!"

When the morning breaks after a night of this remorse, he hears the distant chiming of bells; learns of the festival of the people in the neighborhood who were going to meet their bishop, Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, and, by a sudden impulse, he too determines to go and present himself to the cardinal. The history of this great prelate, a saintly man, is given in detail — his works

of charity, his writings, his efforts in the cause of education. The Unnamed is welcomed by the Cardinal with joy and genuine tenderness, and the details of a religious conversion, often repulsive to an unsympathetic reader, here become, through the author's skill, both natural and attractive.

Don Abbondio, to his great consternation is now sent with the celebrated outlaw to fetch Lucia from his castle. He goes thither, trembling, grumbling, and complaining to himself like an old woman. The poor girl is released, and believes, of course, that her deliverance is due to the Madonna.

Shortly afterwards the cardinal, on the occasion of a visit to Don Abbondio's parish, takes the poor priest to task for his violated duty in refusing to celebrate the marriage. There are few passages in literature more impressive than the solemn severity of his reproof;—

"Signor Curate, why did you not unite in marriage this Lucia with her bethrothed husband?". . . .

"Don Abbondio began to relate the doleful history; but suppressing the principal name, he merely substituted *a great Signor;* thus giving to prudence the little that he could in such an emergency.

"'And you have no other motive?' asked the Cardinal, having attentively heard the whole.

"'Perhaps I have not sufficiently explained myself,' replied Don Abbondio. 'I was prohibited under pain of death to perform this marriage.'

"'And does this appear to you a sufficient reason for omitting a positive duty?'

"'I have always endeavored to do my duty, even at very great inconvenience; but when one's life is concerned. . . .'"

"'And when you presented yourself to the church,' said Federigo, in a still more solemn tone, 'to receive Holy Orders, did she caution you about your life?' . . . 'He from whom we have received teaching and example, in imitation of whom we suffer ourselves to be called, and call ourselves, shepherds; when He descended upon earth to execute His office, did He lay down as a condition the safety of His life? And to save it, to preserve it, I say, a few days longer upon earth, at the expense of charity and duty, did he institute the holy unction, the imposition of hands, the gift of the priesthood? Leave it to the world to teach this virtue, to advocate this doctrine. What do I say? Oh, shame! the world itself rejects it; the world also makes its own laws, which fix the limits of good and evil; it, too, has its gospel, a gospel of pride and hatred; and it will not have it said that the love of life is a reason for transgressing its precepts. It will not, and it is obeyed. And we! children and proclaimers of the promise! What would the Church be, if such language as yours were that of all your brethren?'

. . . . . .

"'I repeat, my Lord,' answered Don Abbondio, 'that I shall be to blame. . . . One can't give one's self courage.'

"'And why then, I might ask you, did you undertake an office which binds upon you a continual warfare with the passions of the world? . . . . Ah, if for so many years of pastoral labors you have loved your flock (and how could you *not* love them?) — if you have placed in them your affections, your cares, your happiness, courage ought not to fail you in the moment of need; love is intrepid.'"

This discourse, which is much longer than I have quoted, gives us an admirable ideal of the episcopal office, and through the whole of it the contrast between these two natures vividly appears, without any apparent effort on the part of the author to produce it.

In the meantime, Renzo, who has been in hiding under an assumed name, has established secret communication with Agnese, the mother of his betrothed, and is naturally greatly disgusted to learn of Lucia's vow. Lucia has found refuge at Milan with a distinguished lady, one Donna Prassede, who is a type of the "superior woman"—one of those pestilent, unsympathetic natures, determined to do good to others at whatever violence to their feelings; who feels herself the instrument of Heaven and with a consciousness of innate superiority, and great display of patronage, torments Lucia by denouncing the unworthy outlaw to whom her affections have been engaged.

Up to this point the narrative has traversed scenes common enough to the period with which it deals; but here it takes up the story of one of the most terrible public calamities which history records — the appearance of the plague in Milan. The scenes of the preceding famine are vividly described; the inefficacy of the ridiculous legal remedies by which it was proposed to supply the lack of natural resources; the establishment of the Lazaretto; the war raging in Italy, which distracted the attention of the authorities; and, finally, the invasion of the German army, by which the plague

was introduced into the territory of Milan. A historical account is given of the introduction of the contagion, and the various stages of public sentiment in regard to it.

"First, then, it was not the plague, absolutely not — by no means; the very utterance of the term was prohibited. Then, it was pestilential fevers; the idea was indirectly admitted in the adjective. Then, it was not the true nor real plague; that is to say, it was the plague, but only in a certain sense; not positively and undoubtedly the plague, but something to which no other name could be affixed. Lastly, it was the plague without doubt, without dispute; but even then another idea was appended to it, the idea of poison and witchcraft, which altered and confounded that conveyed in the word they could no longer repress."

There are descriptions of the processions in the streets, the exhibition of the body of San Carlo Borromeo, and of the public rage against the supposed poisoners. But the most vivid part of the description begins when the author again takes up the thread of his story and describes the return of Don Rodrigo from a carousal, where he had excited great laughter by a funeral eulogium on his kinsman, Count Attilio, who had been carried off by the disease two days before. There is a powerful description of the coming on of the fatal malady, on his return, and of the dreams that tormented him in his sleep.

"He went on from one thing to another, till he seemed

to find himself in a large church, in the first ranks, in the midst of a great crowd of people; there he was, wondering how he had got there, how the thought had ever entered his head, particularly at such a time; and he felt in his heart excessively vexed. He looked at the bystanders; they had all pale, emaciated countenances, with staring and glistening eyes, and hanging lips; their garments were tattered and falling to pieces; and through the rents appeared livid spots, and swellings. 'Make room, you rabble!' he fancied he cried, looking towards the door, which was far, far away; and accompanying the cry with a threatening expression of countenance, but without moving a limb; nay, even drawing up his body to avoid coming in contact with those polluted creatures, who crowded only too closely upon him on every side. But not one of the senseless beings seemed to move, nor even to have heard him; nay, they pressed still more upon him; and, above all, it felt as if some one of them, with his elbow, or whatever it might be, was pushing against his left side, between the heart and arm-pit, where he felt a painful, and as it were, heavy pressure. And if he writhed himself to get rid of this uneasy feeling, immediately a fresh unknown something began to prick him in the very same place. Enraged, he attempted to lay his hand on his sword; and then it seemed as if the thronging of the multitude had raised it up level with his chest, and that it was the hilt of it which pressed so in that spot; and the moment he touched it he felt a still sharper stitch. He cried out, panted, and would have uttered a still louder cry, when, behold! all these faces turned in one direction. He looked the same way, perceived a pulpit, and saw slowly rising above its edge something round, smooth, and shining; then rose, and distinctly appeared, a bald head; then two eyes, a face, a long and white beard, and the upright figure of a friar, visible above the

sides down to the girdle; it was Friar Cristoforo! Darting a look around upon his audience, he seemed to Don Rodrigo to fix his gaze on him, at the same time raising his hand in exactly the attitude he had assumed in that room on the ground floor in his palace. Don Rodrigo then himself lifted up his hands in fury, and made an effort, as if to throw himself forward and grasp that arm extended in the air; a voice, which had been vainly and secretly struggling in his throat, burst forth in a great howl; and he awoke. He dropped the arm he had in reality uplifted, strove, with some difficulty, to recover the right meaning of everything, and to open his eyes, for the light of the already advanced day gave him no less uneasiness than that of the candle had done; recognized his bed and his chamber; understood that all had been a dream; the church, the people, the friar, all had vanished — all, but one thing — that pain in his left side. Together with this, he felt a frightful acceleration of palpitation at the heart, a noise and humming in his ears, a raging fire within, and a weight in all his limbs, worse than when he lay down. He hesitated a little before looking at the spot that pained him; at length, he uncovered it, and glanced at it with a shudder; — there was a hideous spot, of a livid purple hue."

The unhappy man now finds that he has been betrayed by Griso, the chief of his bravoes, who, under pretense of bringing the doctor, has introduced into the room the horrible *monatti,* whose duty it is to drag away the dead to their graves and the sick to the Lazaretto. They plunder the stricken man of his treasures before his eyes, and then carry him away.

In the meantime Renzo, who has had the plague

in the Bergamascan territory, finds it safe to return home, amid the general confusion, and proceeds to Milan to find Lucia. The terrible scenes in the streets are graphically described, but the realism is combined with a certain delicacy on the part of the author which renders even its most dreadful details not wholly repulsive. For instance, Renzo sees coming down the steps of one of the doorways

"A woman with the delicate, yet majestic beauty, which is conspicuous in the Lombard blood. Her gait was weary, but not tottering; no tears fell from her eyes, though they bore tokens of having shed many; there was something peaceful and profound in her sorrow, which indicated a mind fully conscious and sensitive enough to feel it. . . . She carried in her arms a little child, about nine years old, now a lifeless body; but laid out and arranged, with her hair parted on her forehead, and in a white and remarkably clean dress, as if those hands had decked her out for a long promised feast, granted as a reward. Nor was she lying there, but upheld and adjusted on one arm, with her breast reclining against her mother's, like a living creature; save that a delicate little hand, as white as wax, hung from one side with a kind of inanimate weight, and the head rested upon her mother's shoulder with an abandonment deeper than that of sleep: her mother; for, even if their likeness to each other had not given assurance of the fact, the countenance which still depicted any feeling would have clearly revealed it."

"A horrible looking *monatto* approached the woman, and attempted to take the burden from her arms, with a kind of unusual respect, however, and with involuntary hesitation. But she, slightly drawing back, yet with the

air of one who shows neither scorn nor displeasure, said, 'No, don't take her from me yet; I must place her myself on this cart; here.' So saying, she opened her hand, displayed a purse which she held in it, and dropped it into that which the *monatto* extended towards her. She then continued: 'Promise me not to take a thread from around her, nor let any one else attempt to do so, and to lay her in the ground thus.'

"The *monatto* laid his right hand on his heart; and then zealously, and almost obsequiously, rather from the new feeling by which he was, as it were, subdued, than on account of the unlooked-for reward, hastened to make a little room on the car for the infant dead. The lady, giving it a kiss on the forehead, laid it on the spot prepared for it, as upon a bed, arranged it there, covering it with a pure white linen cloth, and pronounced the parting words: 'Farewell, Cecilia! rest in peace! This evening we, too, will join you, to rest together forever. In the meanwhile, pray for us; for I will pray for you and the others.' Then, turning again to the *monatto,* 'You,' said she, 'when you pass this way in the evening, may come to fetch me too, and not me only.'

"So saying, she re-entered the house, and, after an instant, appeared at the window, holding in her arms another more dearly-loved one, still living, but with the marks of death on its countenance. She remained to contemplate these so unworthy obsequies of the first child, from the time the car started until it was out of sight, and then disappeared. And what remained for her to do, but to lay upon the bed the only one that was left her, and to stretch herself beside it, that they might die together, as the flower already full blown upon the stem falls together with the bud still enfolded in its calyx, under the scythe which levels alike all the herbage of the field."

Renzo learns that Lucia has been taken to the Lazaretto, and he proceeds thither. The scenes in that dreadful abode of suffering are described in detail. Here he meets Father Cristoforo, who in tending the sick is already falling a victim.

"His voice was feeble, hollow, and as changed as everything else about him. His eye alone was what it always was, or had something about it even more bright and resplendent; as if Charity, elevated by the approaching end of her labors, and exulting in the consciousness of being near her source, restored to it a more ardent and purer fire than that which infirmity was every hour extinguishing."

Renzo learns that Don Rodrigo himself is lying unconscious in one of the miserable hovels, and, filled at first with rage at the recollection of the man who has caused him so much wretchedness, he is at last brought, by the commanding reproofs of Father Cristoforo, into such a forgiving spirit that he can pray for his enemy's salvation.

Renzo seeks Lucia in vain amid the procession of the few persons who were going forth cured from the Lazaretto, but he finds her at last, convalescent in one of the little huts in the woman's quarters. A very characteristic conversation ensued between the lovers in regard to the binding nature of her vow, which Renzo naturally disputes, and calls Father Cristoforo to remonstrate and interpose. The good father consolingly tells Lucia that she had no right to offer to the Lord the will of another to whom she was already

pledged; and by virtue of the authority of the church he absolves her from her vow. It is not long until the lovers, restored to their former happiness, leave the Lazaretto; and the book concludes with the consummation of their wishes — their marriage, and a happy wedded life.

A great deal of quiet satire pervades the story. Take, for instance, the following, in the description of Lecco, at the very opening of the book:

"At the time the events happened which we undertake to recount, this town, already of considerable importance, was also a place of defense, and for that reason had the honor of lodging a commander, and the advantage of possessing a fixed garrison of Spanish soldiers, who taught modesty to the damsels and matrons of the country; bestowed from time to time marks of their favor on the shoulders of a husband or a father; and never failed, in autumn, to disperse themselves in the vineyards, to thin the grapes, and lighten for the peasant the labors of the vintage."

There is a great deal of homely philosophy intermixed with this satire. For instance, the criticism of

"those prudent persons who shrink back with alarm from the extreme of virtue as well as vice, are forever proclaiming that perfection lies in the medium between the two, and fix that medium exactly at the point which they have reached, and where they find themselves very much at their ease."

These delicate touches come in most appro-

priately, and, as it were, spontaneously from the context. They are never lugged in head foremost, for the evident purpose of saying a good thing.

The book abounds in apt similes; for instance, in the following description of Perpetua's vain efforts to keep a secret:

"But certain it is that such a secret in the poor woman's breast was like very new wine in an old and badly-hooped cask, which ferments, and bubbles, and boils, and if it does not send the bung into the air, works itself about till it issues in froth, and penetrates between the staves, and oozes out in drops here and there, so that one can taste it, and almost decide what kind of wine it is."

When the bravoes, led by Griso, in the guise of a pilgrim, attempt to carry off Lucia from her home and are suddenly thrown into consternation by the pealing of the bell, the author tells us:

"It required all the authority of Griso to keep them together, so that it might be a retreat and not a flight. Just as a dog urging a drove of pigs, runs here and there after those that break the ranks, seizes one by the ears, and drags him into the herd, propels another with his nose, barks at a third that leaves the line at the same moment, so the pilgrim laid hold of one of his troop just passing the threshold, and drew him back, detained with his staff others who had almost reached it, called after some who were flying they knew not whither, and finally succeeded in assembling them all in the middle of the court-yard."

The characters are extremely well described.

Perhaps the two lovers are the least striking of any in the book. Lucia is a simple peasant girl; Renzo, a rash, impulsive, kindly boy, easily led, a very natural, grown-up child such as Italy produces in greater luxuriance than colder and severer latitudes. There are no passionate love scenes in the book. The affection of the betrothed for each other seems rather an incident than the principal theme of the story. Don Ferrante, the husband of Donna Prassede, is a fine type of scholastic pedantry. The catalogue of his ridiculous acquirements in the absurd philosophy and learning of the time, with long lists of authors now unknown, reminds us of the studies of Don Quixote; Don Ferrante, too, is skilled in the science of chivalry, wherein he enjoyed the title of "Professor," and "not only argued on it in a real, masterly manner, but, frequently requested to interfere in affairs of honor, always gave *some* decision."

The officiousness of Donna Prassede is well set forth in the following:

"It was well for Lucia that she was not the only one to whom Donna Prassede had to do good. . . . Besides the rest of the family, all of whom were persons more or less needing amendment and guidance — besides all the other occasions which offered themselves to her, or she contrived to find, of extending the same kind offices, of her own free will, to many to whom she was under no obligations; she had also five daughters, none of whom were at home, but who gave her much more to think about than if they had been. Three of these were nuns, two were married; hence Donna Prassede naturally found her-

self with three monasteries, and two houses to superintend; a vast and complicated undertaking, and the more arduous, because two husbands, backed by fathers, mothers, and brothers; three abbesses, supported by other dignitaries, and by many nuns, would not accept her superintendence. It was a complete warfare, *alias* five warfares, concealed, and even courteous, up to a certain point, but ever active, ever vigilant. There was in every one of these places a continued watchfulness to avoid her solicitude, to close the door against her counsels, to elude her inquiries, and to keep her in the dark, as far as possible, on every undertaking. We do not mention the resistance, the difficulties she encountered in the management of other still more extraneous affairs; it is well known that one must generally do good to men by force."

The story, like some other of the greatest works of fiction — like Don Quixote, Les Miserables, nay, like Henry Esmond itself, is somewhat too prolix. The long historical citations, the extracts from the edicts and proclamations of the time, look as if the author considered it necessary to prove his story rather than to let it prove itself. That Renzo and Lucia should leave Father Cristoforo to die alone is, to my mind, the most serious blemish in the book; but in spite of these shortcomings, "The Betrothed" is entitled to one of the first places in the front rank of the masterpieces of fiction.

EUGENIE GRANDET

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

IT is not quite fair to Balzac to judge him by any one of the stories in his encyclopædic "Comedie Humaine." The countless varieties of life and character which he portrays show the author's versatility and power, and have perhaps a value from their very number which can not be adequately treated when we consider only a single specimen of his work. Many of his characters, it is true, are grotesques; some are absolute deformities; others are hard to understand by any but a Frenchman,— French human nature, as it seems to me, being a little different from human nature elsewhere; but there is one great work of his which, although it is not without its morbid side, must appeal to the common consciousness of all mankind, and bring to every human heart the conviction of its spiritual truth. "Eugenie Grandet" is a novel of this universal kind of excellence.

The plot is a very simple one. M. Grandet is a miser who lives in an old comfortless house in Saumur with his wife, his daughter Eugenie, and big Nanon, the maid of all work. The Cruchots and the De Grassins are intriguing for the hand of the heiress, and on Eugenie's birthday, when all

these are assembled, a stranger unexpectedly appears, Charles Grandet, her cousin, committed to the care of his uncle by his father in Paris, who has become a bankrupt and has determined upon suicide. Charles, however, knows nothing of this, and is overcome with pitiful grief when he learns of his father's death. Eugenie, a simple minded girl, falls in love with him, but the old miser, anxious to get rid of him, sends him to the Indies. Grandet's tyranny over his wife and child is graphically portrayed. The poor wife succumbs to it and dies. It is not long till the miser follows her, and Eugenie is left alone with a colossal fortune for which she cares nothing, and with a lover from whom she has received no word. In the meantime Charles has acquired a fortune of his own, and on his return writes to her that he wishes to marry another. Her dream is over, the light of her life is extinguished; she gives her hand without her heart to Cruchot, and upon his death continues her hopeless life alone in the desolate home, administering her estate with economy, but devoting its proceeds to works of beneficence.

This is a story, the like of which has happened many a time in actual life, but the cold skeleton of the tale as given above conveys not the slightest idea of the warm flesh and blood with which it is invested. The description of the old street and the dreary house and its furniture is a literary jewel. The account of the way in which Grandet accumulates his fortune, and of the neighborhood rumors regarding his wealth, stirs our

own acquisitiveness as we read it, and shows him to be a very natural and almost inevitable sort of miser. He is moreover a man of commanding ability, who extorts respect even though he inspires abhorrence. The details of his habits, his economies, and his schemes, as well as his personal appearance, are admirably given. Equally life-like are the descriptions of big Nanon, the devoted house-servant, starved and overtasked, yet always grateful to the master who took her when none others would; of the wife, submissive, sensitive, magnanimous, and uncomplaining; and of Eugenie, a girl who has grown up in perfect innocence of the world, pure, beautiful, and of a generous and noble spirit. All these are the subjects of an odious domestic tyranny on the part of "Goodman Grandet," the particulars of which are set forth with powerful fidelity.

Charles is a rather uninteresting young dandy, who comes arrayed for conquest. It is not unnatural that an artless girl like Eugenie should fall in love with him, and her devices to procure him such luxuries as a cake, a wax candle, and sugar for his coffee, add to the charm of their simple love-making. The sympathy of the two women in his sorrow contrasts sharply with the sordid calculations of the miser, and the scene where Eugenie learns his needs by furtively reading two of his letters (for even her good qualities are decidedly of the French type) and then brings him her little store of gold, and when he hesitates, begs him on her knees to take it — this

scene is very effective, as is also her despairing cry, after he departs, "O mother, mother, if I had God's power for one moment!"

But the more tragic parts of this simple drama are near its close,—the stormy scene when Grandet learns that Eugenie has given Charles her money, her imprisonment in a room of the old house, her mother's illness and patient death, and, ghastliest of all, the last hours of the miser:

"So long as he could open his eyes, where the last sparks of life seemed to linger, they used to turn at once to the door of the room where all his treasures lay, and he would say to his daughter, in tones that seemed to thrill with a panic of fear:

"'Are they there still?'

"'Yes, father.'

"'Keep watch over the gold! . . . Let me see the gold.'

"Then Eugenie used to spread out the louis on a table before him, and he would sit for whole hours with his eyes fixed on the louis in an unseeing stare, like that of a child who begins to see for the first time; and sometimes a weak infantine smile, painful to see, would steal across his features.

"'That warms me!' he muttered more than once, and his face expressed a perfect content.

"When the curé came to administer the sacrament, all the life seemed to have died out of the miser's eyes, but they lit up for the first time for many hours at the sight of the silver crucifix, the candlesticks, and holy water vessel, all of silver; he fixed his gaze on the precious metal, and the wen on his face twitched for the last time.

"As the priest held the gilded crucifix above him that

the image of Christ might be laid to his lips, he made a frightful effort to clutch it — a last effort which cost him his life. He called Eugenie, who saw nothing; she was kneeling beside him, bathing in tears the hand that was growing cold already. 'Give me your blessing, father,' she entreated. 'Be very careful!' the last words came from him; 'one day you will render an account to me of everything here below.' Which utterance clearly shows that a miser should adopt Christianity as his religion."

Then follows the long waiting of Eugenie; the dastardly letter sent by Charles after his return; the noble dignity with which she releases him and pays his father's creditors to preserve the honor of one who is quite careless of it himself, and then resigns herself to her hopeless destiny.

"Eugenie Grandet" is a consummate work of art.

DEAD SOULS

NIKOLAI GOGOL

"DEAD SOULS," the masterpiece of Gogol, is not very widely known among English readers, but it is entitled to a high rank in literature. Perhaps the fact that it is a torso has been one cause of this neglect, for before the second volume was finished the author was overtaken by that madness which clouded his last days. But the first volume is practically complete in itself. It records the efforts of the smug, shrewd, rascally Tchitschikoff to procure from various landowners certain paper transfers of the serfs who had died on their estates since the last enumeration in order to effect a fraudulent loan by means of a list corresponding with the official register. The description of the stranger, of his sudden arrival in a provincial city, of the various estates he visits and the remarkable people he encounters, and then, while his enterprise is prospering, of the sudden spreading of the scandal through the town and his forced flight to other regions — these things are told with a power of portraiture which is amazing. The characters he describes are sometimes grotesque, but they are faithful to the essentials of human nature; even the wild Nozdreff and the massive Sobakevitch are very real. Gogol has been called the Dickens of Russian lit-

erature, and his portraits, while fewer in number and variety, are less like puppets than many of those drawn by the English novelist. His description of Pliushkin the miser is quite as striking as that of L'Avare of Moliere or Père Grandet of Balzac, while his account of the way the gossip regarding Tchitschikoff started and circulated is as fine as anything in "The School for Scandal." He calls his book a "poem," and although it is quite devoid of versification or lofty diction, yet if the word "poem" means a "work of original creative art," "Dead Souls" will fully justify the name.

It has the same sort of masterly quality as "Don Quixote," and transports us as completely to the scenes which it describes. His patriotic apostrophe to Russia in the final chapter, and his description of the swift flight of the hero in his troika, are picturesque and eloquent to the last degree.

THE THREE GUARDSMEN

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

PROBABLY there is no better example of the novel of adventure than "The Three Guardsmen," by Alexandre Dumas. The author claims in his preface a historical origin for his novel. However that may be, the plot seems plausible in spite of its extravagances, and never was there a book in which men conspired and slaughtered each other more merrily, nor in which the mere strenuous life without moral accessories has found a more perfect embodiment.

The book in its way is a masterpiece. The style is simple and luminous to such a degree as would hardly be possible in any other language than that in which it was written. No work in the world is more easy to read, to understand, or to translate. The old French dictum that no words should be used in literature which can not be understood upon the market-place here attains its highest realization.

As for the characters, they are of the simplest type. The dashing devil-may-care soldier and adventurer, the deep drinker, the heavy player, the man who with equal gayety defies the bullets of the enemy and the commonest precepts of morality, has here his apotheosis. Perhaps the hero of the book even more than D'Artagnan him-

self is Athos, the chief of the three musketeers, who, having made an unfortunate marriage in his youth, has forsaken his name and station and embarked upon a life of mere adventure. We love him and admire him, and yet it is hard to tell why upon any logical or ethical principles we should do either. Yet when he gets very drunk, or when he hangs his wife because he finds that she bears upon her shoulder the mark of a criminal conviction, we feel that he has done in each case exactly the right thing. Generally a novelist seeks by contrasting his hero with more commonplace characters to set him off in relief, but in this novel almost everybody is a hero, and all are equally and superlatively great and admirable, except perhaps the poor woman who has been hanged and comes to life again and engages in divers diabolical plots against the rest of the world.

JANE EYRE

CHARLOTTE BRONTE

"JANE EYRE" is a book which impresses the reader with its power,— I might say its masculine power, were it not for the fact that the author gives us at every turn the woman's point of view.

The narrative, like that of "David Copperfield," is in the form of an autobiography, and the plot, which is quite simple, has only that sort of unity which the heroine gives it. Yet the work glows with intense passion and the characters are so faithful to nature that they convince us that vivid personal experience must have come to the aid of the author's imagination in delineating them.

Jane Eyre, an orphan, is abused and mistreated in childhood, first in the family of Mrs. Reed, where she is brought up, and afterwards at the Lowood charity school, where she is first a pupil and then becomes a teacher. She seeks a situation as governess, and finds employment at Thornfield Hall, the residence of a Mr. Rochester, who, after a wild, dissipated, wandering life, has come, some time before, into possession of this splendid property. Here she has the charge of Adele, his ward.

There is a certain uncanny secret about Thornfield which the governess finds herself unable to

fathom. She hears wild laughter and inarticulate sounds in a distant part of the Hall. One night Rochester's bed is mysteriously set on fire, and Jane Eyre saves his life. On another occasion, while the house is full of guests, a horrible shriek comes from the upper floor and a murder is well nigh committed by some unknown creature who is hidden there.

In the meantime Mr. Rochester has become greatly interested in his little governess, who, although quiet and plain in appearance, is warm-hearted and high-spirited, with a strong sense of duty, great courage, and an indomitable will. And she on her side becomes fascinated and at last utterly devoted to her master, a man of brilliant parts, strong, brusque, proud and autocratic. He offers her his hand, and she accepts him, to learn, however, in the very presence of the altar and during the wedding ceremony, that he has another wife! It seems that in his early years he had been beguiled into a marriage in the West Indies with a woman whose dissolute courses had wrecked his life, and had terminated in her own madness, and that this was the maniac who had occasioned the strange scenes at the Hall.

Jane Eyre now flees from Thornfield, concealing all traces of her whereabouts. She wanders amid incredible hardships and destitution, and at last finds shelter at Moor House, the home of St. John Rivers and his two sisters, who are afterwards discovered to be her relatives, and with whom she divides a legacy which she receives from

a deceased uncle. St. John is a country clergyman of high character, full of zeal, ambition, and fanaticism, and determined to devote his life to missionary service in India. He seeks her hand, but she realizes that it is not from love but to make her his fellow laborer in the work of the Gospel. He has sought to inspire her with his own enthusiasm, and she is on the point of yielding, when she seems to hear the voice of Rochester calling to her in pain and anguish. She returns to Thornfield, and finds that the Hall has been consumed in a conflagration kindled by the maniac, and that Rochester, who had sought in vain to save the life of the wretched creature, has been himself rescued, blind and a cripple, from the ruins. She seeks him and becomes his wife.

But the bare recital of these leading events gives very little idea of the characters in this somber and tragic tale, or the feelings which control their actions. The book must be read through to be understood. From the very beginning the author strikes a resounding chord in human nature. Brutality to children stirs us to fury, and no one, not even Dickens or Victor Hugo, has painted this form of tyranny in livelier colors than Charlotte Brontë. The conduct of Mrs. Reed and of Rev. Mr. Brocklehurst, the sanctified and inhuman director of Lowood school, arouses our hot resentment.

Of course there are blemishes in the book. Sometimes the conversation is too carefully written to be natural. Then there is an intrinsic improba-

bility in the plot. Why should a young woman so self-sufficient as the heroine consent to marry Rochester before she had solved the secret of Thornfield? But these defects in the novel are trifling by the side of its abounding excellences. At nearly every point the heroine awakens our admiration; we feel (sometimes, perhaps, in spite of our better judgment) that she is doing right; and so masterly is the author's portraiture that, in spite of many repulsive features, she awakens a stronger sympathy for the seared and blighted Rochester than for the pure and devoted yet inexorable St. John Rivers. Jane Eyre is an eloquent novel. It is emphatically a work of genius.

CARMEN

PROSPER MERIMÉE

IT has always seemed to me that "Carmen" was a story of great power and told with wonderful skill. I know not whether it be fact, nor whether the author has learned it in the way he says; but so convincing is the narrative, it seems to me impossible that it is a mere product of the imagination. Yet the leading characters are so abnormal that I sometimes wonder why I believe this story so thoroughly. It must be because it is true.

The author, in pursuing certain archæological researches to discover the site of the ancient battle of Munda, comes with his guide upon a secluded amphitheatre among the rocks, where he suddenly encounters an outlaw, José Navarro, whom he makes his friend by the exchange of some simple courtesies and by warning him at the humble venta where they lodge together, of the approach of the officers of justice.

Some days afterwards, while the author was leaning upon the parapet of the quay at Cordova, Carmen, a young gipsy girl of a strange and savage beauty, comes and sits near him. After some conversation he accompanies her to her residence to have his fortune told. Suddenly the door

opens, and Navarro, in a very bad humor, enters the room. A quarrel ensues between him and Carmen in the gipsy language, and it appears from the gestures that the young girl is urging the bandit to cut the stranger's throat. He refuses, takes the author by the arm, leads him into the street, and directs him home.

Some time afterwards the narrator, in passing through Cordova, learns that Navarro has been condemned to death, and upon a visit to the prison the day before his execution, the bandit tells him the strange story of his liaison with this wild and cruel, yet fascinating girl.

At the great cigar factory at Seville she has a bloody altercation with one of her fellow operatives. Navarro, a rough, green soldier stationed in that city, is ordered to conduct her to prison. She talks to him in his own Basque tongue, pretending to be his fellow countryman, and pleads with him to release her. Inflamed with a sudden passion, he suffers her to escape, and is himself degraded and imprisoned. She secretly sends to him in his cell the means of securing his freedom, and after his release she gives him the liveliest proofs of her gratitude and affection. But she is capricious and fickle to the last degree. Urged by jealousy, Navarro kills an officer and is compelled to desert the army, and at her instigation he takes up the life, first of a smuggler, and then of a bandit. She is the controlling spirit of a little band of outlaws, whose diabolical crimes are described in a manner so natural that they cease to

appear extraordinary. Navarro slays the husband of Carmen, a one-eyed miscreant, and takes his place as her lawful lord. But she soon falls in love with a *picador,* and although this passion is as ephemeral as the rest, Navarro is seized with fury. He strives to persuade her to go with him to some distant region where they can begin life anew. He will forgive the past; he asks only her companionship and love. But she spurns him; he may kill her if he likes, but she will not live with him. She scorns even to flee or to defend herself. At his command she rides with him to a lonely place, where he stabs her, while her eyes flash defiance. He buries her in the wood and delivers himself to justice.

In spite of her crimes and infidelities, there is a touch of heroism and magnanimity in this wild creature which commands our admiration, and explains the passion she awakens in the heart of Navarro.

" Carmen " is a short story, meagre both in incidents and characters, but its few touches are those of the master. It is a work of consummate art.

DAVID COPPERFIELD

CHARLES DICKENS

"DAVID COPPERFIELD" and "Henry Esmond" are perhaps the best illustrations extant of the advantages of the autobiographical method in fiction, which, whatever may be its drawbacks, is better fitted than any other to subjective description. It is said that the true function of the painter is to reproduce things on the canvas, not as they are, but as they appear to the person observing them. In like manner it is often the function of the novelist's art to describe the world, not as it is, but as it appears to some particular person; and there is no better way to do this than by an autobiography. The artistic truth of the picture will appear, when the reader says to himself, "How often that thing looked just so to me!" Of course the estimate of the truth of this sort of a picture will vary with the personal temperament of the reader, but I think most young readers will find an instant bond of sympathy between David Copperfield and themselves.

At the time I first read it, as a college student, I think no work of fiction had ever attracted me so greatly. There seemed to be much in it which corresponded with my own feelings and expe-

riences, and I still think that those parts of the book that deal with childhood, youth, and early manhood are very true to nature. David's description of the home at Blunderstone where he was born, of the church, of the fowls in the yard and the fears that they occasioned, of his joy in the house that was made out of a boat on the sand, of his resentment at the tyranny of his stepfather, of his school-boy fancies, of his hero-worship of the brilliant Steerforth,— in short, his general way of looking at the world is so exactly like that of the ordinary healthy boy under similar circumstances that these parts of the book are, in the highest and best sense of the word, very realistic.

But as a whole the work has no such convincing power over me to-day as it had when I first read it. Some of the characters, indeed, like little Miss Mowcher, Barkis, and Mr. Creakle, seem more like puppets and less like real persons than they did. Many of them seem to carry about with them a sort of trade-mark, to certify to their genuineness,— Heep's "humility," for instance, Murdstone's "firmness," or Littimer's "respectability"; or perhaps the test of identity is a formula, like "thinking of the old 'un" of Mrs. Gummidge, or "waiting for something to turn up" of Micawber. In many cases the picture is a caricature rather than a real portrait, and yet it has the advantage of the caricature, that it sets forth in bold relief the leading feature and fixes itself forever in the memory.

There is little to say about the story, for it is known to all. Practically three or four stories are woven into one. There is the story of David himself, a boy who, after a comfortable childhood with his young widowed mother and her old house servant Peggotty, falls under the tyranny of a stepfather and his sister, and is sent to be beaten and abused at Creakle's school, and when his mother dies is put out to a miserable and hopeless existence at the dismal counting-house of Murdstone and Grinby. He runs away, and in absolute destitution betakes himself to the home of Betsey Trotwood, an aunt whom he has never seen, but with whom he finds a refuge. Then follows the description (one of the best chapters in the book) of his school days at Canterbury; his devotion to Miss Shepherd; his romantic adoration of Miss Larkins, who marries an elderly hop-grower; his disastrous fight with a butcher. He is then articled to Mr. Spenlow, of Doctor's Commons, to become a proctor, and falls in love with Dora, Spenlow's daughter, an affectionate, foolish little creature, whom he marries. He wins a reputation as an author, and after the death of his "child-wife," and a period of travel, finally weds Agnes Wickfield, who has always loved him, and who, ever since his school days at Canterbury, has been the guardian spirit of his life.

Intertwined with this story is that of the family of Mr. Peggotty, the brother of David's old nurse, who lives in the boat on the sand at Yarmouth, with his nephew Ham, and Em'ly, his

adopted child, a beautiful creature, who is betrayed by David's friend Steerforth, with whom she elopes on the eve of her marriage to Ham, and who afterwards abandons her. An affecting picture is given of the honest Mr. Peggotty seeking his poor child through the world; of her final return, and of the great storm and shipwreck, in which Steerforth goes down, and Ham loses his life in a vain attempt at rescue.

Another strand in the cord of this remarkable story is that of Micawber and his family, with whom Copperfield becomes a lodger during his gloomy days at Murdstone and Grinby's, — a man who, after various misfortunes, including poverty, jail, and a wretched life in which he is made the tool of the hypocritical Uriah Heep, is finally sent to Australia on the same vessel with Mr. Peggotty and Emily, and begins a career of ultimate prosperity.

But the story is interesting not so much on account of the plot as of the people who are in it, and the human interest which runs through the whole.

In addition to the naturalness of Copperfield's own feelings, there are other characters that are very true to life. That of his eccentric aunt, Betsy Trotwood, is perhaps a little overdrawn at first, in her interview with the doctor on the occasion of David's birth, but afterwards her warmth of heart, frankness, and the strong good sense which underlie her rude behavior and eccentricities, the combination of strength and weak-

ness in her nature, call to my own mind at every step one whom I have intimately known and greatly loved. There is something immensely refreshing, for instance, in her outbreak at the slimy Uriah Heep:

"'If you're an eel, sir, conduct yourself like one. If you're a man, control your limbs, sir. Good God!' said my aunt, with great indignation, 'I'm not going to be serpentined and corkscrewed out of my senses!'"

Her noble conduct in concealing what she believed to be the defalcation of her old friend Mr. Wickfield is equally characteristic:

"'And at last he took the blame upon himself,' added my aunt, 'and wrote me a mad letter, charging himself with robbery and wrong unheard of; upon which I paid him a visit early one morning, called for a candle, burned the letter, and told him if he ever could right me and himself to do it, and if he could not, to keep his own counsel for his daughter's sake.'"

The "umble," pious, and vindictive scoundrel, Uriah Heep, has been a type of whining hypocrisy. The description of him as Copperfield first saw him is remarkable:

"A red-haired person, a youth of fifteen, as I take it now, but looking much older; whose hair was cropped as close as the closest stubble, who had hardly any eyebrows and no eyelashes, and eyes of a red brown, so unsheltered and unshaded that I remember wondering how he went to sleep. He was high-shouldered and bony,

dressed in decent black, with a white wisp of a neck-cloth buttoned up to the throat, and had a long, lank, skeleton hand, which particularly attracted my attention as he stood at the pony's head, rubbing his chin and looking up at us in the chaise."

On the whole, perhaps Heep's character is rather a grotesque than a reality. Everywhere he inspires us with unutterable aversion. He worms himself into the secrets of Wickfield, his employer, takes advantage of his weakness for drink, and finally gets possession of much of his property. Afterwards, in the prison scene, he is equally true to his snaky nature, and becomes an edifying and pious pattern of the products of prison reform.

The quiet, respectful, and respectable Littimer, Steerforth's serving-man, who seemed to be always saying to the awestruck David, "You are young, sir; you are very young," — and who afterwards became his master's tool in the disgraceful intrigue with Em'ly, will find many a counterpart in actual life. There are some of us who in our youth have felt similar awe in the presence of such a domestic.

Perhaps the most charming chapters in the book are those which describe the courting, the marriage, and the disastrous housekeeping of David and his child-wife, Dora, in which the little dog Jip plays such a conspicuous part. They are a pair of precious young noodles; yet the love-making, in spite of its absurdity, is so absolutely natural, and the foolish Dora so utterly affectionate,

up to the pathetic scene of her death, that the incidents awaken a very strong sympathy.

Mr. Micawber, of course, is an exaggeration; but how many men have we known who possessed some of his essential traits,—his stilted diction, his sudden alternations of supreme joy and utter despair, his mania for letter-writing, his visionary hopes and schemes in the midst of his distresses? How perfect in its way is the final newspaper account of the public dinner in Australia given in his honor!

Mr. Peggotty's search through the world for Little Em'ly seems to me now greatly overstrained, though I did not think so when I first read it. There is a very true touch in the description of the old Mrs. Gummidge, who had always been querulous and complaining until great sorrow fell upon the household, when she became at once helpful, considerate, and cheerful in comforting the distress of others. We have all seen examples of this kind of transformation.

Dickens has done mankind a service by portraying the dignity of simple things and the delicacy and nobility of character that often lie beneath a rough exterior, among those whom Lincoln used to call "the plain people," of whom Lincoln was himself perhaps the most illustrious type. What could be nobler and in its essential character more gentlemanly than the behavior of Mr. Peggotty and Ham after the betrayal of Little Em'ly; what more delicate than Peggotty's appreciation of Em'ly's feeling toward him?

"'She would go to the world's furdest end if she could once see me again, and she would fly to the world's furdest end to keep from seeing me. For tho' she ain't no call to doubt my love — and doen't — and doen't — but there's shame steps in and keeps betwixt us.'"

Dickens's style is often intensely vivid — for instance, in his description of a London fog in "Bleak House"; of the burning Marseilles sun in "Little Dorrit"; of the storm and shipwreck in "David Copperfield"; — all fine instances of word-painting. Yet the crudities are many and glaring, there is very little finish, and sometimes the diction is commonplace.

But there are occasional passages of extraordinary beauty, due possibly not so much to the style as the sentiment and the things described. Witness the following, where David describes his feelings when he had taken refuge with his aunt in her cottage at Dover, after his escape from Murdstone and Grinby's:

"The room was a pleasant one, at the top of the house, overlooking the sea, on which the moon was shining brilliantly. After I had said my prayers, and my candle had burnt out, I remember how I still sat looking at the moonlight on the water, as if I could hope to read my fortunes in it, as in a bright book; or to see my mother with her child, coming from Heaven along that shining path, to look upon me as she had looked when I last saw her sweet face. I remember how the solemn feeling with which at length I turned my eyes away, yielded to the sensation of gratitude and rest with which the sight of the

white-curtained bed — and how much more the lying softly down upon it, nestling in the snow-white sheets — inspired. I remember how I thought of all the solitary places under the night sky where I had slept, and how I prayed that I never might be houseless any more, and never might forget the houseless. I remember how I seemed to float, then, down the melancholy glory of that track upon the sea, away into the world of dreams."

"David Copperfield" may not be the supreme work of fiction which some of us once fancied it, but it touches the heart very closely. It dignifies humble life and common things, makes us better friends with the world, and awakens those human traits which work for kindness and goodwill toward all mankind.

THE SCARLET LETTER

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

MOST persons of culture, if asked who was the foremost American writer of fiction would undoubtedly answer, "Nathaniel Hawthorne." Among his works "The Scarlet Letter" is, I think, the most generally read and widely known. This high estimate of Hawthorne is in most respects well deserved. His works have a fine literary and poetic quality. The style is faultless; the dramatic situations are admirably conceived; and the structure of the plot, while simple, is extremely artistic. Hawthorne generally deals with the darker phases of human life, with scenes of wickedness and crime. His description of the emotions awakened by criminal acts is extremely powerful. And yet it seems to me, in reading his pages, that Hawthorne had little knowledge of what were the actual motives and feelings of the guilty, and that his account of the development of passions and character came rather from reflection and abstract reasoning than from acute observation.

The book begins dramatically rather than historically — that is to say, in the very middle of the impressive story which it relates. Hester Prynne, the heroine, had married old Roger

Chillingworth, a union unnatural and without affection, which was followed on her part, during her husband's long and unexplained absence, by a guilty passion for Arthur Dimmesdale, the eloquent clergyman of a Puritan New England town. All the incidents connected with the growth and development of this passion, and with the birth of the child which followed it, are omitted from the narrative, which opens with a scene at the door of the prison, from which Hester comes forth to suffer the punishment prescribed for her crime,—to stand for a certain time in the scaffold by the pillory, and to wear for the rest of her life the scarlet letter A upon her breast. We have nothing to tell us how the temptation began, nor how it grew, nor the terrible anxieties which must have preceded the discovery of her wrongdoing. Possibly these things are the more impressive because left wholly to the imagination.

But among the multitude that gaze upon the unfortunate woman in the hours of her public exposure is a face that she knows only too well. Old Roger Chillingworth, who has been so long absent, and supposed even to be dead, appears and recognizes her. He visits her afterwards in prison, and exacts from her an oath that his identity shall remain unknown. The terrible punishment of the scarlet letter to a sensitive mind is powerfully portrayed; her shame at every new face that gazes upon it, and the consciousness of another sense, giving her a sympathetic knowledge of hidden sin in other hearts, a strange compan-

ionship in crime, upon which Hawthorne lays much stress in many of his works. Even little Pearl, her child, gives her no comfort, for the child's character is wayward, elusive, elf-like. She is a strange creature, whose conversation brings to her mother constant reminders of her guilt. Hester, with great constancy, refuses to disclose the name of the child's father, and Dimmesdale, the honored pastor of the community, is tortured by a remorse which constantly grows upon him. Old Chillingworth suspects him, becomes his physician, lives with him under the same roof, discovers a scarlet letter concealed upon his breast, and enjoys for years the exquisite revenge of digging into the hidden places of a sensitive human soul and gloating over the agonies thus unconsciously revealed to a bitter enemy. An account is given of Dimmesdale's self-imposed penances, and of the concealed scourge for his own chastisement. One night he resolves to go forth and stand on the same scaffold where Hester has undergone her punishment. The bitterness of his emotions is finely drawn; the wild shriek which barely fails to rouse the citizens of the town; the passing of Hester on her way from her ministrations at a death-bed; the standing together of the three, father, mother, and child, upon the scaffold; the letter A which appears in the sky; Pearl's keen questions; and the face of old Chillingworth, who has come forth to look on them.

Hester at last resolves to disclose to Dimmesdale the identity of his evil companion. Her

character has grown stronger through openly bearing the burden of her guilt, while the poor clergyman's soul has become shattered through his constant hypocrisy. She meets him in the forest, and in a scene of great natural tenderness and beauty tells him that Chillingworth is her husband. He reproaches her bitterly for her long concealment, then forgives her. She urges him to flee, as his only hope.

"'Exchange this false life of thine for a true one. Be, if thy spirit summon thee to such a mission, the teacher and apostle of the red men. Or,— as is more thy nature,— be a scholar and a sage among the wisest and the most renowned of the cultivated world. Preach! Write! Act! Do anything, save to lie down and die! Give up this name of Arthur Dimmesdale, and make thyself another, and a high one, such as thou canst wear without fear or shame. Why shouldst thou tarry so much as one other day in the torments that have so gnawed into thy life!— that have made thee feeble to will and to do! — that will leave thee powerless even to repent; Up, and away!'

"'O Hester!' cried Arthur Dimmesdale, in whose eyes a fitful light, kindled by her enthusiasm, flashed up and died away, 'thou tellest of running a race to a man whose knees are tottering beneath him! I must die here! There is not the strength or courage left me to venture into the wide, strange, difficult world, alone!'

"It was the last expression of the despondency of a broken spirit. He lacked energy to grasp the better fortune that seemed within his reach.

"He repeated the word.

"'Alone, Hester!'

"'Thou shalt not go alone!' answered she, in a deep whisper.

"Then, all was spoken!"

In connection with their proposed departure to Europe, the minister inquired of Hester the time at which the vessel would depart, and learned that it would probably be on the fourth day thereafter. "That is most fortunate!" the clergyman then said to himself. The reason why he considered it fortunate revealed a very subtle phase of human nature.

"It was because, on the third day from the present, he was to preach the Election Sermon; and as such an occasion formed an honorable epoch in the life of a New England clergyman, he could not have chanced upon a more suitable mode and time of terminating his professional career. 'At least, they shall say of me,' thought this exemplary man, 'that I leave no public duty unperformed, nor ill performed.'"

And of this strange feeling the author remarks:

"No man, for any considerable period, can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true one."

Having resolved upon flight, however, and in the joy of his anticipated release from a dreadful life, a curious change comes over Mr. Dimmesdale, a revolution in his sphere of thought and feeling.

"At every step he was incited to do some strange, wild, wicked thing or other, with a sense that it would be at once involuntary and intentional; in spite of himself, yet growing out of a profounder self than that which opposed the impulse."

When he met one of his old deacons, it was only by the most careful self-control that he could refrain from certain blasphemous suggestions respecting the communion supper. When he met a pious and exemplary old dame, the eldest of his flock, whom he had often refreshed with warm, fragrant Gospel truths, he could now recall no text of Scripture, nor aught else, except a brief, pithy, and, as it then appeared to him, unanswerable argument against the immortality of the human soul. He was tempted to make certain evil suggestions to one of the young women of his flock, and to teach some very wicked words to a knot of little Puritan children. He had come back from the forest another man.

But when the hour of departure approaches, and amid the preparations for the great Election Sermon, Hester hears that Roger Chillingworth has learned of their intended flight and taken passage by the same ship!

The final climax is reached when Dimmesdale, after preaching his great sermon, which arouses the people to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, comes forth from the church, and recognizes Hester and Pearl. At his earnest entreaty she supports him to the scaffold, where he stands at her

side, and, against the protestations of old Chillingworth, confesses his guilt, shows the scarlet letter upon his own breast, and expires. Chillingworth does not long survive him. Hester goes with Pearl across the sea, but after some years returns alone, again resumes the scarlet letter, and takes up her old life in her little cottage near the town.

The moral of the book, from the poor minister's miserable experience, is put into this sentence: "Be true, be true, be true; show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred." Hester's strength in bearing her sorrow is contrasted powerfully with the growing weakness and degeneracy of Dimmesdale, and with the transformation of Chillingworth into a devil, through constant gratification of his revenge. The strange conduct of Pearl, who, with her child's instinct, resents the conduct of the minister who will recognize her mother and herself only in secret, adds to the effect; yet it can not be said that Pearl is in the least a natural child. She seems almost as mature when she first asks her mother who it was that sent her into the world, and denies that she has a Heavenly Father, as she does in the last pages of the book. The appearance of Mistress Hibbins, the old witch, who was afterwards executed, throws a gleam of the supernatural across the pages.

It is a weird story, the product of a luxuriant though somewhat morbid imagination; but the novelist, on the other hand, lacks that acute per-

ception, that knowledge of trifling circumstances, such as would have appeared in the pages of Balzac or Tolstoi — those suggestive details which unconsciously set forth men's motives, feelings, and character better than any philosophical reflections.

HENRY ESMOND

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

THE equestrian painting by Velasquez of Prince Balthasar Charles, the original of which is in the Madrid Museum, is now well known throughout the world by means of photographs and other reproductions. It represents a very small boy on a very huge horse, which is in the act of rearing. The anatomy of the animal is impossible, and it is safe to say no boy as small as the Prince ever assumed under like circumstances the attitude attributed to him; and yet, in spite of its defects, this picture is a very remarkable and a very beautiful painting. We know in an instant that it is the work of a master. Indeed it is only the work of a master which could contain such blemishes and still be great. Similar flaws sometimes deface the greatest works of literature — for instance, the putting out of Gloucester's eyes in "Lear," or the Walpurgis Night's Dream in the first part of "Faust." And so it is with "Henry Esmond." It is marred by one or two dreadful deformities; and yet, in spite of them, it is perhaps the most charming novel ever written.

The book opens with one of the most exquisite scenes in all literature, where young Esmond, a

lad twelve years of age, who is supposed to be the illegitimate son of Thomas, Viscount Castlewood, and who has led a rather hard life as a page of the old viscountess, and been left alone in the great house after his father's death, is now found in the yellow gallery by Lady Castlewood, the young and beautiful wife of the new viscount, when she comes with her husband to take possession of the property. The scene is thus described:

"She stretched out her hand — indeed, when was it that that hand did not stretch out to do an act of kindness, or to protect grief and ill-fortune? 'And this is our kinsman,' she said; 'and what is your name, kinsman?'

"'My name is Henry Esmond,' said the lad, looking up at her in a sort of delight and wonder, for she had come upon him as a *Dea certe,* and appeared the most charming object he had ever looked on. Her golden hair was shining in the gold of the sun; her complexion was of a dazzling bloom; her lips smiling, and her eyes beaming with a kindness which made Harry Esmond's heart beat with surprise.

"'His name is Henry Esmond, sure enough, my lady,' said Mrs. Worksop, the housekeeper (an old tyrant whom Henry Esmond plagued more than he hated), and the old gentlewoman looked significantly toward the late lord's picture; as it now is, in the family, noble and severe-looking, with his hand on his sword and his order on his cloak, which he had from the Emperor during the war on the Danube against the Turk.

"Seeing the great and undeniable likeness between this portrait and the lad, the new viscountess, who had still hold of the boy's hand as she looked at the picture, blushed

and dropped the hand quickly, and walked down the gallery, followed by Mrs. Worksop.

"When the lady came back, Harry Esmond stood exactly in the same spot and with his hand as it had fallen when he dropped it on his black coat.

"Her heart melted, I suppose (indeed she hath since owned as much) at the notion that she should do anything unkind to any mortal, great or small; for when she returned, she had sent away the housekeeper upon an errand by the door at the further end of the gallery; and, coming back to the lad, with a look of infinite pity and tenderness in her eyes, she took his hand again, placing her other fair hand on his head, and saying some words to him, which were so kind, and said in a voice so sweet, that the boy, who had never looked upon so much beauty before, felt as if the touch of a superior being or angel smote him down to the ground, and kissed the fair protecting hand, as he knelt on one knee. To the very last hour of his life, Esmond remembered the lady as she then spoke and looked — the rings on her fair hands, the very scent of her robe, the beam of her eyes lighting up with surprise and kindness, her lips blooming in a smile, the sun making a golden halo round her hair."

The story now digresses, returning to Esmond's early life, the vague recollections of his childhood abroad, his coming to Castlewood, his education by Father Holt, a Jesuit priest, the plots and intrigues of the family on behalf of King James, the seizure of the great house by King William's troops, the arrest of the viscountess in her bed, and the death of the viscount at the battle of the Boyne.

The young page was warmly welcomed by the

new viscount, as well as by Lady Castlewood, and he became the instructor of their children. There are exquisite descriptions of their domestic life in the earlier pages of the book.

"There seemed, as the boy thought, in every look or gesture of this fair creature, an angelical softness and bright pity — in motion or repose she seemed gracious alike; the tone of her voice, though she uttered words ever so trivial, gave him a pleasure that amounted almost to anguish. It can not be called love that a lad of twelve years of age, little more than menial, felt for an exalted lady, his mistress; but it was worship. To catch her glance, to divine her errand, and run on it before she had spoken it; to watch, follow, adore her, became the business of his life. Meanwhile, as is the way often, his idol had idols of her own, and never thought of or suspected the admiration of her little pigmy adorer.

"My lady had on her side her three idols; first and foremost, Jove and supreme ruler, was her lord, Harry's patron, the good Viscount of Castlewood. All wishes of his were laws with her. If he had a headache, she was ill. If he frowned, she trembled. If he joked, she smiled, and was charmed. If he went a-hunting, she was always at the window to see him ride away, her little son crowing on her arm, or on the watch till his return. She made dishes for his dinner; spiced his wine for him; made the toast for his tankard at breakfast; hushed the house when he slept in his chair, and watched for a look when he woke. If my lord was not a little proud of his beauty, my lady adored it. She clung to his arms as he paced the terrace, her two fair little hands clasped round his great one; her eyes were never tired of looking in his face and wondering at his perfection."

But it was not long until my lord began to grow weary of the bonds in which his lady held him and at the jealousy which went hand and hand with her affection.

"Then perhaps, the pair reached that other stage, which is not uncommon in married life, when the woman perceives that the god of the honeymoon is a god no more; only a mortal like the rest of us; and so she looks into her heart, and lo! *vacua sedes et inania arcana!*"

One unhappy day Esmond brings the smallpox to Castlewood from an ale-house in the village, which he has visited, and where he has met Nancy Sievewright, the blacksmith's pretty daughter. Lady Castlewood, on hearing this, breaks out into a strange fit of rage and jealousy; but when Esmond is taken ill she nurses him tenderly, contracting the disease herself, while the viscount with his little daughter Beatrix flees from the contagion. He returns to find his wife's beauty marred a little for a time, whereupon his love for her grows weak and she betakes herself to the affection of her children. With a little legacy that comes into her possession, she sends Esmond to the University, whence he returns on vacation to find a skeleton in the household. His kind mistress is shedding tears in secret, while her husband drinks heavily, neglects her for an actress in a neighboring town, and brings home Lord Mohun, a notorious rake, with whom he spends his nights at play, and squanders his fortune. At last Mohun is suspected of designs against my lady, and in a drive

with this unscrupulous man Esmond warns him to leave Castlewood. An accident occurs; Mohun is thrown out and injured. The viscount tells his wife that "Harry is killed" (Harry being the name both of Esmond and Mohun). She screams, and falls unconscious. A duel follows, and Lord Castlewood is slain by Mohun's sword, but before his death confesses that he has learned from Father Holt that Esmond is the legitimate son of his predecessor, and the lawful heir to Castlewood. Esmond burns the confession and resolves not to profit by a claim which will bring sorrow upon his kind mistress and her children. He is sent to prison for participating in the duel, from which he had endeavored to dissuade his patron and afterwards to defend him. Here Lady Castlewood visits him. She brings no comfort, however, but upbraids him in her wild grief:

"'I lost him through you — I lost him, the husband of my youth, I say. I worshiped him — you know I worshiped him — and he was changed to me. He was no more my Francis of old — my dear, dear soldier! He loved me before he saw you, and I loved him! Oh, God is my witness, how I loved him! Why did he not send you from among us? 'Twas only his kindness, that could refuse me nothing then. And, young as you were — yes, and weak and alone — there was evil, I knew there was evil in keeping you. I read it in your face and eyes. I saw that they boded harm to us — and it came, I knew it would. Why did you not die when you had the smallpox, and I came myself and watched you, and you didn't know me in your delirium — and

you called out for me, though I was there at your side. All that has happened since was a just judgment on my wicked heart — my wicked, jealous heart. Oh, I am punished, awfully punished! My husband lies in his blood — murdered for defending me, my kind, kind, generous lord — and you were by, and you let him die, Henry!'"

He is crushed by her injustice, but does not waver in his devotion. After his imprisonment is over he procures an ensign's commission and participates in the destruction of the French fleet in Vigo Bay. On his return he hears that his mistress is about to marry the chaplain of Castlewood, and he hastens to prevent the match. The rumor is unfounded, but it furnishes the opportunity for reconciliation. They meet in Winchester Cathedral after the service:

"She gave him her hand — her little fair hand; there was only her marriage ring on it. The quarrel was all over. The year of grief and estrangement was passed. They never had been separated. His mistress had never been out of his head all that time. No, not once. No, not in the prison, nor in the camp, nor on shore before the enemy, nor at sea under the stars of solemn midnight, nor as he watched the glorious rising of the dawn; not even at the table where he sat carousing with friends, or at the theater yonder, where he tried to fancy that other eyes were brighter than hers. Brighter eyes there might be, and faces more beautiful, but none so dear — no voice so sweet as that of his beloved mistress, who had been sister, mother, goddess to him during his youth — goddess now no more, for he knew of her weaknesses,

and by thought, by suffering, and that experience it brings, was older now than she; but more fondly cherished as woman perhaps than ever she had been adored as divinity. What is it? Where lies it? the secret which makes one little hand the dearest of all? Who ever can unriddle that mystery?"

And then when Esmond gently reproaches her that she had never told him of her sorrow for her cruel words, and that the knowledge would have spared him many a bitter night:

"'I know it, I know it,' she answered, in a tone of such sweet humility as made Esmond repent that he should ever have dared to reproach her. "I know how wicked my heart has been; and I have suffered too, my dear. I confessed to Mr. Atterbury — I must not tell any more. He — I said I would not write to you or go to you; and it was better, even, that, having parted, we should part. But I knew you would come back — I own that. That is no one's fault. And to-day, Henry, in the anthem, when they sang it, "When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream," I thought, yes, like them that dream — them that dream. And then it went, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy; and he that goeth forth and weepeth shall doubtless come home again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him;" I looked up from the book, and saw you. I was not surprised when I saw you. I knew you would come, my dear, and saw the gold sunshine round your head.'"

. . . . . .

"'If — if 'tis so, dear lady,' Mr. Esmond said, 'why should I ever leave you? If God hath given me this

great boon — and near or far from me, as I know now, the heart of my dearest mistress follows me — let me have that blessing near me, nor ever part with it till death separate us. Come away — leave this Europe, this place which has so many sad recollections for you. Begin a new life in a new world. My good lord often talked of visiting that land in Virginia which King Charles gave us — gave his ancestor. Frank will give that. No man there will ask if there is a blot on my name, or inquire in the woods what my title is.'

"'And my children — and my duty — and my good father, Henry?' she broke out. 'He has none but me now; for soon my sister will leave him, and the old man will be alone. He has conformed since the new Queen's reign; and there in Winchester, where they love him, they have found a church for him. When the children leave me I will stay with him. I cannot follow them into the great world, where their way lies — it scares me. They will come and visit me; and you will, sometimes, Henry — yes, sometimes, as now, in the Holy Advent season, when I have seen and blessed you once more.'

"'I would leave all to follow you,' said Mr. Esmond; 'and can you not be as generous for me, dear Lady?'

"'Hush, boy!' she said, and it was with a mother's sweet, plaintive tone and look that she spoke. 'The world is beginning for you. For me, I have been so weak and sinful that I must leave it, and pray out an expiation, dear Henry. Had we houses of religion as there were once, and many divines of our church would have them again, I often think I would retire to one and pass my life in penance. But I would love you still — yes, there is no sin in such a love as mine now; and my dear lord in heaven may see my heart; and knows the tears that have washed my sin away — and now —

now my duty is here, by my children while they need me, and by my poor old father, and —'

"'And not by me?' Henry said.

"'Hush!' she said again, and raised her hand to his lip. 'I have been your nurse. You could not see me, Henry, when you were in the smallpox, and I came and sat by you. Ah, I prayed that I might die, but it would have been in sin, Henry. Oh, it is horrid to look back to that time. It is over now and past, and it has been forgiven me. When you need me again I will come ever so far. When your heart is wounded then come to me, my dear. Be silent! Let me say all. You never loved me, dear Henry — no, you do not now, and I thank Heaven for it. I used to watch you, and knew by a thousand signs that it was so. Do you remember how glad you were to go away to College? 'Twas I sent you. I told my papa that, and Mr. Atterbury too, when I spoke to him in London. And they both gave me absolution — both — and they are godly men, having authority to bind and to loose. And they forgave me, as my dear lord forgave me before he went to heaven.'

"'I think the angels are not all in heaven,' Mr. Esmond said. And as a brother folds a sister to his heart; and as a mother cleaves to her son's breast — so for a few moments Esmond's beloved mistress came to him and blessed him."

After this wonderful chapter there comes another of almost equal beauty, if it stood alone, but the two together make a strange discord. For when they reach Walcote, which is now the family home, Beatrix, the daughter of Lady Castlewood, comes down the stairs to greet him.

"Esmond had left a child and found a woman, grown

beyond the common height, and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible; and that night the great Duke was at the playhouse after Ramillies, every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theater at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty — that is, her eyes, hair, and eyebrows and eyelashes were dark; her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders. But her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine; except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity, whose foot, as it planted itself on the ground, was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace — agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen — now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic — there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes feels young again, and remembers a paragon."

Esmond falls instantly in love with the dazzling beauty, and the rest of the book, down to nearly the end of the last chapter, has for its theme his fruitless devotion to this brilliant, volatile, imperious, and capricious girl, and her mother's sympathy with him in his vain suit!

He again betakes himself to the army to win

a rank and a name so as to lay them at her feet. He takes part in the great campaigns of Marlborough in Flanders — at Donauworth, Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Wynendael, Malplaquet. He is wounded at Blenheim, and again (near the close of the war) at Mons, and he is promoted until he reaches the rank of colonel. He returns to England from time to time, meets the brilliant girl (now maid of honor to the Queen) to whom his life is devoted, only to have his heart torn by her coldness and her caprices. Once for a moment she relents, but the mood passes and she pursues her schemes of ambition. First she is betrothed to Lord Ashburnham, then to the Duke of Hamilton, and when that nobleman falls in a duel with Lord Mohun, it is Esmond who has to bring her the news of this crushing blow to her ambition.

And now he will attempt one brilliant feat to win her. Queen Anne is near her end. Esmond will bring back to England the Pretender, the exiled King (to whose cause the family are deeply devoted) to take the vacant throne. Here follow the details of this scheme, and a description of the king's dissolute and fickle character. He is brought to the house of Lady Castlewood, where he shows too plainly his fancy for Beatrix, who on her part is far too compliant. She is sent away to Castlewood, and becomes furious at the suspicions of her family. When the plot of the king's friends is ripe the Pretender can not be found. A letter from Beatrix informing

him that she is a prisoner is intercepted, and Esmond and her brother Frank ride all night to Castlewood, where they find the young king, and although they are in time to save her honor, yet this crowning infidelity has crushed out the last spark of Esmond's love. On their return to London the Queen is dead and George is proclaimed King.

Let the concluding scenes of the story be told in Esmond's own words:

"Ever after that day at Castlewood, when we rescued her, she persisted in holding all her family as her enemies, and left us, and escaped to France, to what a fate I disdain to tell. Nor was her son's house a home for my dear mistress; my poor Frank was weak, as perhaps all our race hath been, and led by women. . . . 'Twas after a scene of ignoble quarrel on the part of Frank's wife and mother (for the poor lad had been made to marry the whole of that German family with whom he had connected himself) that I found my mistress one day in tears, and then besought her to confide herself to the care and devotion of one who by God's help would never forsake her. And then the tender matron, as beautiful in her autumn, and as pure as virgins in their spring, with blushes of love and eyes of meek surrender yielded to my respectful importunity, and consented to share my home."

If Esmond had shot himself, or turned monk, or spent his last days alone, or lived with Lady Castlewood as her son, the artistic harmony of the book would have been preserved, but to marry one who had been in the place of a mother to him

all these years — Faugh! not even the genius of Thackeray can make such a match attractive. This dreadful anticlimax mars what would otherwise be beyond all question (and what may be still in spite of it) the most beautiful work of fiction ever written.

Thackeray knows better than any other novelist, except perhaps Cervantes, how to describe a gentleman. That peculiar aggregation of qualities so unmistakable, yet so elusive of definition, which go to make up this character, appear more clearly in his novels than anywhere else in English fiction. Henry Esmond, Colonel Newcome and Major Dobbin are almost as perfect examples of this as the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance himself. And Thackeray (in another work) thus speaks to us of gentlemen:

"Perhaps these are rarer personages than some of us think for. Which of us can point out many such in his circle, men whose aims are generous, whose truth is constant, and not only constant in its kind but elevated in its degree; whose want of meanness makes them simple; who can look the world honestly in the face with an equal manly sympathy for the great and small? We all know a hundred whose coats are very well made, and a score who have excellent manners, and one or two happy beings who are what they call in the inner circles, and have shot into the very centre and bull's eye of the fashion; but of gentlemen how many? Let us take a little scrap of paper and each make out his list."

The diction of Thackeray is exquisite beyond

all comparison with that of any other author. There are some repetitions, and many marks of carelessness, but Thackeray does not suffer because he is careless, he seems rather to gain by it. Henry Esmond is full of digressions; for example, the historical accounts of the campaigns in Flanders have little to do with the main purpose of the story. But where else can we find history written with such a charm? You seem to be in the midst of the events it chronicles, beholding its great scenes and listening to contemporary gossip and criticism. Where else is any such description of a hero like that of Marlborough:

"Our chief, whom England and all Europe, saving only the Frenchmen, worshiped almost, had this of the godlike in him, that he was impassible before victory, before danger, before defeat. Before the greatest obstacle or the most trivial ceremony; before a hundred thousand men drawn in battalia, or a peasant slaughtered at the door of his burning hovel; before a carouse of drunken German lords, or a monarch's court, a cottage-table, where his plans were laid, or an enemy's battery, vomiting flame and death, and strewing corpses round about him — he was always cold, calm, resolute, like fate. He performed a treason or a court-bow, he told a falsehood as black as Styx, as easily as he paid a compliment or spoke about the weather. He took a mistress and left her, he betrayed his benefactor and supported him, or would have murdered him, with the same calmness always, and having no more remorse than Clotho when she weaves the thread, or Lachesis when she cuts it. . . .

"His qualities were pretty well known in the army,

where there were parties of all politics, and of plenty of shrewdness and wit; but there existed such a perfect confidence in him, as the first captain in the world, and such a faith and admiration in his prodigious genius and fortune, that the very men whom he notoriously cheated of their pay, the chiefs whom he used and injured (for he used all men, great and small, that came near him, as his instruments alike), and took something of theirs, either some quality or some property — the blood of a soldier it might be, or a jeweled hat, or a hundred thousand crowns from a king, or a portion out of a starving sentinel's three farthings; or (when he was young) a kiss from a woman and the gold chain off her neck, taking all he could from woman or man, and having, as I said, this of the god-like in him, that he could see a hero perish or a sparrow fall with the same amount of sympathy for either. Not that he had no tears; he could always order up this reserve at the proper moment to battle; he could draw upon tears or smiles alike, and whenever need was for using this cheap coin. He would cringe to a shoeblack, as he would flatter a minister or a monarch; be haughty, be humble, threaten, repent, weep, grasp your hand, or stab you, whenever he saw occasion — but yet those of the army who knew him best, and had suffered most from him, admired him most of all; and as he rode along the lines of battle, or galloped up in the nick of time to a battalion reeling from before the enemy's charge or shot, the fainting men and officers got new courage as they saw the splendid calm of his face and felt that his will made them irresistible."

What a description of the destruction of the French army after Ramillies:

"At first it was a retreat orderly enough; but presently

the retreat became a rout, and a frightful slaughter of the French ensued on this panic; so that an army of sixty thousand men was utterly crushed and destroyed in the course of a couple of hours. It was as if a hurricane had seized a compact numerous fleet, flung it all to the winds, shattered, sunk, and annihilated it: *Afflavit Deus et dissipati sunt.*"

The author is not so successful in the introduction of his literary characters, one of whom, Joseph Addison, not only has no relation to the story, but adds little to the merit of the work.

A peculiarity of Thackeray is the subtle manner in which the motives and passions of his various personages sometimes reveal themselves. For instance, Lady Castlewood's intense love for Esmond in the early part of the book is altogether a matter of inference from her strange conduct, and might very easily be overlooked or misunderstood by persons who lack insight and keen perception. Indeed, in some places the indications of the motive as drawn from the words and actions of his heroines are so delicate and shadowy, that we can not always quite tell what the author would have us infer, or perhaps we even come to the conclusion that there is no accounting for a woman. And yet, even when we are thus at fault, how entirely natural it all seems!

Thackeray never wanders into unknown territory. He writes about the people he knows and describes the things with which he is in close contact. In the development of the story there is a blending of experience and imagination, which mu-

tually aid each other in the creation of characters that are marvelously ideal and true to nature at the same time.

Dickens's men and women are frequently types. You can predict with great confidence what each will do under given circumstances. Thackeray's characters are more uncertain and elusive. But is not this the way of the world? Those of us who have been mistaken in the conduct of our friends or enemies (and who has not?) must acknowledge the essential truthfulness of many a portrait which at first blush appears inconsistent.

And in this novel, in which Colonel Esmond tells his own story, the author shows his surpassing power in making us see his principal characters, especially his dear mistress and her daughter, not so much as they really were, but as they appeared to the man who loved them. Thackeray gives to our understanding very good reason to doubt whether Lady Castlewood had all the perfections he attributes to her, but he compels our hearts to join in Esmond's worship, and to feel even toward the wayward Beatrix a share of the passion of her lover.

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

"UNCLE TOM'S CABIN" is a novel which was written for a purpose. It was an attack upon the system of negro slavery and was intended to awaken the people of the North to a realization of the horrors and essential wickedness of that institution. So well did it accomplish its purpose that it became an important feature of the history of the abolition movement, which led to the organization of the Republican party and finally to the overthrow of slavery. No other American novel had such a circulation nor left so deep an impression upon its time. But it has long outlived its moral purpose, and the persistent demand both for the book and for the play which is taken from it shows that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" has a vitality of its own, which entitles it to a high rank among works of fiction. What are the elements of its excellence?

It is not in all respects a finished production. The style is uneven and marred by occasional crudities and weaknesses. The author evidently lacks a good deal in the matter of literary education. Words are used unnecessarily which are colloquial, very rare, or perhaps not found in the dictionary at all. Thus: "The rocking chair of the good Quakeress Rachel Halliday kept up a

subdued creechy-crawchy"; Rachel collects "needments" for Eliza out of her household stores; St. Clare speaks of the "cheatery" of his negroes, and other phrases are used which are equally obsolete or unconventional. Some of the sentences are awkward in the extreme, and there are involved paragraphs, with inconsistent similes and metaphors.

Besides this, there is a certain femininity pervading the book, which appears in minute descriptions of household duties and utensils, and in a certain religious flavor of the Sunday-school variety, which obtrudes itself in inappropriate places.

But although the mere literary quality of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is not high, the work is characterized by great dramatic power, and permeated with a feeling so intense that the expression of it rises in many places into eloquence. The great feature of this somber and absorbing novel is its convincing character. The truth of the dreadful facts which it recounts are shown, not merely by contemporary records, but the events are described in such a way as to bring with them the consciousness that they must have occurred. This overpowering impression of reality and the tragic pathos of the tale itself contain the secret of its power.

The main plot of the novel flows on in a very natural manner. Uncle Tom, a faithful, conscientious negro, is the property of a Kentucky master who is compelled by necessity to tear him away from his family and sell him "down the

river." First he becomes the property of St. Clare, an excellent man, upon whose death he is purchased by one Legree, an incarnate fiend, by whom he is whipped to death for refusing to become the instrument of his master's cruelty. Other incidents, like the escape of Eliza and her husband, who finally obtain their liberty in Canada, are subsidiary to the main design.

Many of the characters are so natural that they must have been taken from living models. The cultured, cynical, yet sensitive and kindly St. Clare, and his querulous wife Marie; Eva, their affectionate, spiritual, fairy-like child; the grotesque Topsy; the prim and precise Miss Ophelia, with strong New England instincts and prejudices; Haley the slave-trader, the "man of humanity," — seem especially life-like. Legree's brutality is almost inconceivable, and its only justification is found in the fact that such men, abnormal as they were, actually existed and controlled the destinies of great numbers of human beings.

Some of the episodes are quite as effective as the main current of the narrative; for example, the stealing of Lucy's baby by the slave trader on the way down the Ohio, followed by the suicide of the mother. We know that children were sold in just that fashion, and the simple narrative tells us exactly what it meant. There is a terrible power, too, in the whispered story about poor Prue: "She's got drunk again and they put her down cellar, and they left her all day, and I hearn them saying that the flies had got to her, and she's

dead." No detailed account of the actual barbarities inflicted upon the wretched creature could give a stronger impression of the hideous reality than the whispers of the other slaves who knew of it and yet were afraid to speak.

To make a fine work of art, the subject ought to be worthy and the treatment artistic. Mrs. Stowe fails a little in the latter point, but there was never a novelist with a more impressive theme. It is that theme, after all, which has given to her work the chief part of its permanent value.

CRANFORD

MRS. GASKELL

"CRANFORD" is a novel of somewhat the same character as "Pride and Prejudice." There are few pictures more true to life than Mrs. Gaskell's description of the small town and the little ladies who inhabit it. It was a town from which men were mostly absent, and where it was felt that they would be quite useless even if they were there. The little women were filled with great love for gentility and a distrust of mankind so great that they almost persuaded themselves that to be a man was to be vulgar. They practiced "elegant economies"—for money-spending was "low and ostentatious." They never admitted their poverty, and were greatly shocked when Captain Brown came to town and openly confessed his own. They were so refined that they had to retire to the privacy of their own rooms to suck an orange, and were filled with dismay when at the house of Mr. Holbrook peas were placed upon the table to be eaten with a two-pronged fork.

We have delicious bits of rambling and inconsequent talk, delicate descriptions of the various strata of respectability in Cranford, and of the autocratic social dominion exercised by one Mrs. Jameson, who, although a great tyrant over her

neighbors, lived in abject fear of her own butler. The author portrays graphically the superstitions of the ladies in this little community, their belief in a "murderous gang" which was always upon the point of committing some desperate robbery, their terror of footpads who never appeared, their various opinions upon the subject of ghosts, and the ingenious scheme of rolling a ball under the bed so as to find whether a robber was hidden there, without stooping down to look. The author describes vividly the character of the small economies in which each person is said to have some specialty of his own; while one preserves bits of paper, another saves up all the strings; with a good housekeeper it is butter or cream, while with Miss Mattie Jenkyns, the heroine of the story, if the story can be said to have a heroine, it was in the matter of candles. This Miss Mattie is a lovable character, very self-depreciating and always submissive to her older sister Deborah. Miss Mattie had had a lover in her youth, one Mr. Holbrook, an old-fashioned country farmer who was found lacking in gentility by the rest of the family, therefore her days ebbed away in single blessedness.

Realistic pictures are given of the difficulties of the little ladies with servants and their "followers," who were always forbidden by the strict rules prevailing in Cranford, but who never could be kept out.

There are episodes filled with very real and tender pathos — the sacrifices made by Miss Jes-

sie Brown for her invalid sister, the sad picture of the suffering of the mother whose boy, after a public flogging by his father, ran off to sea. This same boy, later in life, reappeared in Cranford, ever true to his character as a practical joker, and astonished the ladies by his accounts of the hunting of cherubim among the heights of the Himalayas, a kind of sport which seemed to them little better than sacrilege.

The whole book is a delicious epitome of the narrow life of a small town, and is an ample refutation of the curious dogma, lately announced, that women are deficient in the sense of humor!

BARFÜSSELE

BERTHOLD AUERBACH

I HARDLY know whether Auerbach will always be regarded as one of the great masters of fiction, but to me his simple village stories take a higher rank than many works that are far more pretentious. They are filled with infinite tenderness, and are true to the essential traits of human nature. Auerbach has an intimate knowledge of the village life in the Black Forest, of which he writes, and he is able to combine universal characteristics with local peculiarities in such a way that the picture becomes vivid and convincing.

"Barfüssele" is the story of a little orphan girl, a wise child, clear-headed and reflective, who develops under the solemn training of poverty and sorrow into a character of great sweetness, self-reliance, and heroism.

In the opening chapter we see her with her younger brother walking to the house where they have always lived, knocking at the door and calling for their father and mother. The children do not understand the meaning of the funeral they have attended, nor why they have been separated and given to the care of others, and they are looking for their parents to come home again. But there is no answer to their calling, so they go off to the pond and amuse themselves by throwing

stones and making them skip across the water. Here Amrei, the girl, pretends to be more awkward than she really is, in order to give Dami, her little brother, the pleasure of showing his greater skill.

Many charming incidents of childhood follow — accounts of the riddles that she gives and guesses, descriptions of her quaint childish philosophy regarding the birds, the dogs, the trees, and the deep problem of human sorrow.

After a while she begins to earn her living by tending a flock of geese, and when the Rodelbauer, her guardian, wants her to give up such work because it is a reproach to her, she answers steadfastly, "I must carry out what I have begun."

It is a sad life she leads with the Black Marann, a widow, who through long years has been waiting for the return of an only son, from whom she hears nothing. The boy has in fact been killed in Algiers, yet no one in the village dares to tell her, though they tell Amrei, and the child has to bear the burden of this secret. But amid all this gloom, the heart of the orphan girl is strengthened by the precepts of her melancholy companion, who tells her how much better it is to be sufficient to one's self than to depend upon another for happiness. And when at the wedding at the Rodelbauer's no one will dance with "Little Barefoot" (for so the girl is called), she dances by herself and dances well, and says "It is better to dance alone,

for then I do not need to wait for a partner."

But the main purpose of her life is to cheer and stimulate her younger brother, a boy who is weak-spirited, complaining and unsteady, whose character is indeed a sharp contrast to her own. Into his mind she tries to instil her own spirit of independence. He finds service in a neighboring village, and she will not weep at parting with him until after he is gone, and then the world seems very empty to her. Dami is unjustly turned away from his situation and loses all his little belongings in a fire. He works for a while with a charcoal-burner, and then resolves to go to America. His sister secretly rejoices at his bold purpose, but reproves him severely when he wants to revenge himself upon the master who has discharged him. It is largely through her efforts that his passage money is raised. She gives him his father's ax and sack, and tells him that these two things mean that he must work and gather and save the results of his labor, and that they must be the inspiration of his life.

Meanwhile she has been taken into service at the Rodelbauer's, and her goodness and skill have made her indispensable, though she suffers much from the taunts and scolding of Rosel, the daughter of the household. Her clothing is poor, but always very neat, for, says the author, "Neatness is the ornament of poverty, costing nothing, but not to be purchased."

On one occasion Amrei is unexpectedly asked to accompany her master's family to a wedding

party in a neighboring village, and while there, when she overhears Rosel's remark, "It is only our serving maid," she says to herself, "Don't let a word spoil all your pleasure. If you begin that you will walk everywhere upon thorns."

An unknown youth, who comes riding a gray horse, dances with her. There is a lively description of the festival, of her enthusiasm and the joy of that dance, and of her thoughts in her little room in the still night when she returns.

The scene now changes to the house of the Landfriedbauer, a wealthy peasant, whose son Johannes is sent out to seek a wife. His mother follows the boy down the road and has a long confidential talk with him, which is charming for its *naïvete* and shrewdness. Her description of the signs by which a good wife may be told is quite elaborate. Johannes must notice how she behaves towards her servants, how she blows out the light; he must observe her if he can in anger, "when the hidden inner man leaps out"; he must notice how she laughs, whether her flowers thrive, whether she is willing to sing a second part or always wants to set the key. "A girl should never go with empty hands, and she must leap three hedges to pick up a feather." But in her doings she must be quiet and constant, not filled with mad eagerness, "as if she would tear down a piece of the world." He must notice whether she unties a knot or cuts it, whether she keeps her copybooks and early treasures, whether she wears her shoes inside or outside, and whether she cares for

the poor. Thus furnished with much useful information, Johannes rides forth on his gray horse to seek his wife.

Now the father of Johannes has written to the Krappenzacher in Amrei's village, to take his son to the best houses there, and the Krappenzacher, by agreement with the Rodelbauer, is to have a hundred kronenthalers if Johannes marries Rosel. The young man is ostensibly looking for another gray horse, so a horse of that color is put into the Rodelbauer's stable and the young man is brought thither to examine him. On this occasion Rosel is to come out and milk the cows as proof of her housewifery, but as she knows nothing about milking, the experiment is made with a full pail and with a cow already milked. While the men are discussing their horse trade, Rosel's voice is heard in song near by, and "Little Barefoot" sings the second part. Johannes asks who they are, and the Rodelbauer tells him that Amrei is an adopted child of whom his father was once the guardian, for he knows that this will sound better than to say she is a servant.

In the meantime Amrei has discovered that the visitor is the same as he who has danced with her at the wedding, and whose mother it was that gave her a necklace when she was a child; and Johannes on his part finds in Little Barefoot the qualities of which his mother has spoken. In a sudden outbreak of rage and jealousy Rosel strikes Amrei to the ground. Just at that moment Johannes appears, and naturally it is not Rosel

but Little Barefoot whom he chooses for his wife.

The lovers' talk, their riddles and their songs as they ride off together on the gray horse, are set forth in a narrative of singular beauty, and when she reaches his home it is the girl and not Johannes who has to break the news to the Landfriedbauer and his wife and seek their blessing, while the young man stays at the miller's in much anxiety as to the outcome of her mission. Her plea is really eloquent in its simple pathos. She is accepted, and the Landfriedbauer and his wife, being anxious to avoid the reproach of having let the boy marry a penniless girl, each gives her in secret a store of coins which has been laid by, and when both stores are spread upon the table at a family reunion, each parent really begins to believe what they both say, that their new daughter-in-law has come to them with a dowry of her own.

This modern "Cinderella" is written in a style of great simplicity, and in my view, the village heroine, the counterpart of whom no doubt exists in many similar communities, is entitled to a high place in literature.

EKKEHARD

JOSEPH VON SCHEFFEL

"EKKEHARD" is a novel derived very largely from mediæval records that are now little remembered. It attempts to reproduce for the modern reader the political and social conditions of the tenth century, and the story is accompanied with numerous notes and references, giving evidence of the careful researches of the author. It is to German scholarship, indeed, that one would naturally look for a work of this description, for although many novelists elsewhere use historical materials for certain parts of their works, there are few who would follow the records with such fidelity.

The scene opens at a castle on a lofty eminence near the lake of Constance. Hadwig, the young and not inconsolable widow of the old duke, resolves for diversion to go with her train to the monastery of St. Gallus on the other side of the lake. This visit, illustrating many of the details of monastic life, is graphically and attractively described. According to the rules of the order, no woman's foot may pass over the threshold of the cloister, but as the duchess is the protectress of the convent, it is determined that she may be carried over, and the duty falls upon the young monk Ekkehard, whose flattering words win him such favor

that he is commanded to go to her castle of Hohentwiel to instruct her in Latin and read Virgil to her. The development of a very natural romance follows. Ekkehard is as innocent as a child, and for a long time his mistress vainly tries to awaken in him the passion that rises in her own heart. When a horde of barbarous Huns attacks her possessions, and the monks of Reichenau and St. Gallus betake themselves to the castle for defense, she gives him the sword of her late husband and bids him distinguish himself in the combat. The Huns are defeated, but Ekkehard has not signalized himself by any remarkable exploit. In a contest of story-telling, too, he fails to meet the expectations of his mistress, and when at last his own passion is fully aroused, it is too late. He seizes an inopportune moment to declare it. He is detected in the chapel in most unmonastic behavior, and Hadwig is inexorable. He is imprisoned, he escapes and flees to the regions of the higher Alps, where he dwells in a cave, and for his own consolation composes the "Waltharilied," a short epic, full of much slaughter, in which heads and hands and feet are hacked off, eyes put out, and other unappetizing feats of arms performed amid the lusty merriment even of those who suffer from these mutilations. This work is an actual reproduction of a poem of the time, but many will consider it a blemish in a romance with which it has little connection.

When the winter comes and the flocks on the mountains descend to the valleys, Ekkehard leaves

his hermitage, and passing, on his way to distant parts, the castle which had witnessed his discomfiture, he fastens his parchment to an arrow which he sends as a farewell greeting to his former mistress, whose resentment has softened and who receives it with tears.

There are many striking episodes in the book. The stern fury of the hermit Wiborad, immured in a living tomb near the monastery of St. Gallus; the encounter between the coarse cellarer, Rudiman, and Kerhildis, the chief serving-maid of the monastery of Reichenau; the delightful pastoral scenes between the two children Audifax and Hadumoth, bond-servants of the castle; the elaborate and learned lampoon written against Ekkehard by the monk Gunzo in revenge for catching him in a grammatical error; the realistic accounts of certain ridiculous superstitions; the lifelike description of the preparations for a German Christmas — these things give the book a deservedly high rank as a faithful reproduction of the customs of the time. Von Scheffel has invested mediæval monasticism with a fine poetic grace and charm. But it is seldom that a story which is used largely as a means of conveying historical information concerning a remote period is as vivid in the delineation of character as one where the scene is laid amid the immediate surroundings of the writer, and it can not be said that the two chief figures of the novel, Hadwig and Ekkehard, are at all impressive as portraits of actual life.

THE ROMANCE OF A POOR YOUNG MAN

OCTAVE FEUILLET

"THE Romance of a Poor Young Man" is a charming tale, and quite free from the cynicism which pervades much of modern French fiction. The hero (who tells his own story in his diary) is the young Marquis d'Hauterive, who, reduced to extreme poverty by the extravagance of his father, assumes the name of M. Odiot, becomes the manager of the estate of M. Laroque, and falls in love with Marguerite, the beautiful heiress of the house. She secretly returns his passion, but treats him oftentimes with great cruelty from the suspicion that he, like others, is seeking her hand in order to advance his fortunes. The noble character of both the chief personages of the novel appears naturally and simply from the recital of the things they say and do, and the narrative of the expeditions to some of the Celtic ruins in Brittany upon which he attends her has all the charm of a pastoral. The ridiculous M. Bevallan, his rival, who reveals most opportunely his commonplace character and sordid motives; the romantic Mme. Laroque, the mother of Marguerite; the ancient spinster, Mlle, de Porhoet, who bears with dignity her triple burden of high lineage, age, and poverty — indeed

all the characters are skillfully drawn, and their doings form an excellent background for the action of the two chief personages of the story.

"The Romance of a Poor Young Man" is emphatically a work of exquisite finish and high creative art. Yet it does not wholly lack the extravagances which seem inevitable in modern French fiction. When the hero has been unjustly reproached by the proud beauty, who suspects his mercenary designs, he vows in his rage and despair that he will never wed her, even if she were to implore him upon her knees, unless his fortune should be equal to her own; and after every other obstacle is cleared away, he persists in adhering to this unreasonable vow. Then he learns that Marguerite and her mother propose to give their fortune to charitable uses, so as to remove the last hindrance to their union. But this, too, he will not permit, and it requires a *tour de force* to straighten out these complications.

Mlle. de Porhoet has been conducting a long litigation to recover a certain inheritance in Spain. At the moment of her death the property becomes hers, and although she had designed it for the erection of a magnificent cathedral (the dream of her life), she now bequeaths it to the young marquis, and thus the novel has an appropriate and happy termination. But it is hard to resist the conclusion that the outcome would have been more natural if no such extraordinary event had been necessary to bring it about, but only a little more common sense on the part of the hero!

MADAME BOVARY

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

"MADAME BOVARY" is a type of a novel very common in modern literature. It depicts the gradual steps that lead to degradation and ruin, and the fatal influence of a single vicious character upon everything around it.

M. Bovary, a young doctor of moderate attainments, but of earnest purposes, kindly disposition, and upright life, falls in love with the daughter of a wealthy peasant in the neighborhood, who has received at a convent an education above her station, whose mind is filled with romantic notions, and whose eyes are constantly dazzled by the glamour of the rank, wealth and splendor that are just beyond her reach. She becomes more and more dissatisfied with her surroundings and with her rather uninteresting husband, who on his part is entirely devoted to her and who sacrifices his most important interests merely to gratify her whims. She falls into one intrigue after another, becoming first the victim of a *roué*, and then the paramour of a young man much like herself. To gratify her fancies she involves her husband in financial ruin, and at last ends her worthless life by suicide. The death scene is powerfully narrated, and from a merely artistic

point of view the novel is a highly finished production. It is said that such works teach an important lesson — the inevitable results of wrong doing; but in this case at least it may well be questioned whether the details presented in the author's brilliant descriptions are not more likely to lead to the imitation rather than the avoidance of conduct whose present delights are most alluring, however disastrous may be their final consequences. In this tale we see the effect of sentimental and immoral novels upon the heroine herself, and it is hard to resist the conviction that it is largely by reading such works as "Madame Bovary" that Madame Bovarys are made.

THE ORDEAL OF RICHARD FEVEREL

GEORGE MEREDITH

THE fiction of George Meredith, like the poetry of Browning, appeals to a limited class of intellectuals. Close attention is often required to understand the drift of events as well as the philosophy injected at every point into the narrative. A considerable general education is requisite to comprehend the literary and historical references and no little insight is needed to appreciate the subtleties of a dialogue which is often brilliant but sometimes obscure. There are elaborate explanations of the complicated motives and feelings which control the actors of the drama. They do not speak for themselves like the characters in more primitive fiction. There are no such graphic descriptions as that of the London fog in Bleak House, or of the Battle of Waterloo in Les Miserables, and there are few portraits that stand out clearly in the memory like those of Don Quixote or Beatrix Esmond. The whole work is more like a mural decoration or a tapestry than a painting with a clear perspective and strong lights and shades. The style is highly finished, and there are sometimes interesting digressions, though these have not the exquisite *abandon* so often found in those of Thackeray, and the satire lacks something of the airiness which is often its greatest

charm. The author probes many of the hidden recesses of the human heart, but his types are hardly so universal as those of other great masters of fiction. His women are far more attractive than his men.

Meredith is at his best when he is simplest, and Richard Feverel, especially in its early chapters, is simpler than many of his other novels.

Richard Feverel is the only son of Sir Austin, a baronet, who has written his philosophy of life in a series of aphorisms entitled "The Pilgrim's Scrip." Left alone by a faithless wife in the care of his child, to whom he is tenderly attached, he devises a scientific system of training so perfect that the boy is to be "guiltless even of the impulse to gainsay his father's wishes." It works well in the young lad's early escapades, including the setting of fire to Farmer Blaize's hay rick, but it comes to naught when the father attempts to guard his son from the perils of love and imprudent matrimony, and to hunt a wife for him, and it ends in Richard's clandestine marriage with the fair Lucy Dorchester, the niece of this same Farmer Blaize. The father's efforts to keep young Richard and his wife apart after their marriage as a further discipline in accordance with his absurd system of education ends with the wrecking of two lives; with the boy's temptation and fall and a succession of follies terminating in a duel, and finally with the death of his young wife, whose gentle spirit is broken at last under the continual sufferings to which she is subjected. It is a story

of unutterable sadness in its concluding chapters.

A picture of surpassing beauty is that in which young Richard rowing upon the river on his father's estate, first encounters the fair creature who is to become his wife.

"Above green-flashing plunges of a weir, and shaken by the thunder below, lilies, golden and white, were swaying at anchor among the reeds. Meadow-sweet hung from the banks thick with weed and trailing bramble, and there also hung a daughter of earth. Her face was shaded by a broad straw hat with a flexible brim that left her lips and chin in the sun, and, sometimes nodding, sent forth a light of promising eyes. Across her shoulders, and behind, flowed large loose curls, brown in shadow, almost golden where the ray touched them. She was simply dressed, befitting decency and the season. On a closer inspection you might see that her lips were stained. This blooming young person was regaling on dewberries. They grew between the bank and the water making pretty progress to her mouth. . . . The little skylark went up above her, all song, to the smooth southern cloud lying along the blue; from a dewy copse dark over her nodding hat the blackbird fluted, calling to her with thrice mellow note; the kingfisher flashed emerald out of green osiers; a bow-winged heron travelled aloft, seeking solitude: a boat slipped towards her, containing a dreamy youth; and still she plucked the fruit, and ate, and mused, as if no fairy prince were invading her territories, and as

if she wished not for one, or knew not her wishes. Surrounded by the green shaven meadows, the pastoral summer buzz, the weir-fall's thundering white, amid the breath and beauty of wild flowers, she was a bit of lovely human life in a fair setting, a terrible attraction. The Magnetic Youth leaned round to note his proximity to the weir-piles, and beheld the sweet vision. Stiller and stiller grew nature, as at the meeting of two electric clouds. Her posture was so graceful, that though he was making straight for the weir, he dared not dip a scull. Just then one enticing dewberry caught her eyes. He was floating by unheeded, and saw that her hand stretched low, and could not gather what it sought. A stroke from his right brought him beside her. The damsel glanced up dismayed, and her whole shape trembled over the brink. Richard sprang from his boat into the water. Pressing a hand beneath her foot, which she had thrust against the crumbling wet sides of the bank to save herself, he enabled her to recover her balance, and gain safe earth, whither he followed her."

The scene which succeeds — the revelation of the love of each to the other — is worthy to stand by the side of the very best in all dramatic literature, and in the later chapters the utter devotion and perfect womanliness of the young wife, who is made a sacrifice to the baronet's impossible "system," creates a character which is one of the most lovable ever portrayed by the fancy of a writer of fiction.

THE CLOISTER AND THE HEARTH

CHARLES READE

"THE Cloister and the Hearth" is a novel which, like "Ivanhoe" and "Romola," illustrates the fact that it is occasionally possible for a novelist to deal with distant scenes and times long past almost as effectively as with immediate surroundings. In such cases the general groundwork of human nature is ever present, and in matters of detail the imagination supplies the place of accurate knowledge, while the style and the thoughts acquire added dignity by being transported from the commonplace.

This work is unlike most of the other novels of Charles Reade, and is of a higher quality. The dignity of style, however, is by no means uniformly sustained. There are many defects in the book, and very glaring ones. I read it for a long time before its full power and beauty dawned upon me. There is in places an artificial conciseness and often an apparent straining for effect which is unpleasant. There are instances of great carelessness of construction, and colloquialisms which resemble very closely modern slang. As the tale deals with a remote period, the diction is generally archaic; yet the archaism consists not so much in the style as in the use of ob-

solete English words, such as "buss me," "hosen," "shoon," "cowen," etc., which seem inappropriate since the conversation was necessarily in another language. Moreover, these archaisms are not consistently carried out in all places. Many of the jokes and saws are stilted, and some of the poetical quotations are lugged headforemost into places where they do not belong. The main plot is often stifled by the abundance of incidents, and there is an appearance of mechanism in the sudden alternations of hope and fear, success and failure, which chase each other in rapid succession through the pages. There are false notes here and there; language is used and events described which are in atrociously bad taste; incidents are told in a sensational way worthy of yellow journalism; and in places you have the conviction that the characters would not naturally do the things described. Yet, with all these defects, the story of the love of Gerard Eliassoen and Margaret Brandt is full of deep human interest, and in many places the tale is one of singular beauty.

Elias, a small tradesman of Tergou, and Catherine, his wife, have many children, and to provide for them the utmost economy is necessary. One of the sons, Gerard, an illuminator of manuscripts, is destined for the clergy. He becomes a competitor for two of the prizes offered by Philip the Good of Burgundy for the best painting and writing on vellum. On his way to the competition at Rotterdam he falls in with an

old man, Peter Brandt, a so-called magician, and his daughter Margaret; and when he wins a prize, and when in addition the Princess Marie has promised him a benefice, he has fallen so deeply in love with Margaret that "the hours they spent together were the hours they lived; the rest they counted and underwent."

His parents oppose the marriage, and the burgomaster, Ghysbrecht Van Swieten, has strong personal reasons for preventing it. Gerard and Margaret are betrothed, and have signed their marriage lines in the presence of witnesses, so that the law holds them for man and wife; but twice when they appear at the altar the wedding is interrupted, and the second time Gerard is imprisoned in the tower of the Stadthouse, from which he escapes by the device and aid of Margaret. He is pursued by Ghysbrecht and his retainers, and after many hairbreadth escapes, in which Margaret repeatedly rescues him, he flees from Holland and goes on foot to Rome, where he intends to pursue his art, and then return to claim his bride. The liveliest descriptions are given of his adventures on the way — of the German inns, of the companion who accompanies him, Denys the Burgundian soldier, a well drawn character, garrulous, brave, generous, and debonair, whose constant formula of encouragement is "*Courage, l'ami, le diable est mort!*" and whose foible, like that of many of his compatriots, is a fondness for women. There is a blood-curdling description of a combat with a bear, whose

cub they have stolen; of a supper under a gibbet; of a pedantic doctor, who is burned by the irons with which he had proposed to cauterize Gerard. In places the story seems almost like some mediaeval Baedeker, filled with accounts of the sights to be seen and of the customs of the people, as well as with tales of the carousals of the monks in the convents. The two companions pass into Burgundy, and Burgundian manners are vividly contrasted with those of Germany. They betake themselves to an inn, where the landlord and six confederates conspire to murder them; but after a bloody struggle, with marvelous incidents and prodigies of daring, they are rescued, and their assailants are duly hanged or broken on the wheel. But now the two friends are separated; Denys is impressed by a band of soldiers, and Gerard is left alone, to be robbed by highwaymen.

At home, in the meantime, there is a conspiracy between the burgomaster and two brothers of Gerard, who seek to prevent his marriage, and a false letter is sent to him at Rome telling him Margaret is dead.

A graphic picture is drawn of his despair, of his plunging madly into a reckless and wicked life, to drown his grief. He resolves upon suicide, but he is rescued from the Tiber and awakens to consciousness in a convent, where, filled with penitence, he embraces the monastic life, and becomes a preacher of great power. And now come alternating chapters,

picturing Gerard in the cloister and on his pilgrimages, and Margaret, with her child, by the hearth at home.

Finally, on a pilgrimage to England, Gerard passes through Rotterdam, and preaches with great eloquence in the convent church. Margaret is present. The chapters are of great power which portray the recognition of the lovers, the discovery of the false letter, and the curse launched by Gerard upon his two brothers who had planned it. But soon Gerard disappears, and becomes an anchorite in a cave not far away. There is a superb description of the struggles of his soul; of the temptations that beset him; of his "turning to gloomy madness"; of his dreams, in which the face of Margaret comes to him irradiated with sunshine, while she blushes and casts on him looks of ineffable tenderness, murmuring, "Gerard, be whose thou wilt by day, but at night, be mine!"; of his terrible efforts to subdue the body, and of his spiritual conquest. But Margaret has discovered the anchorite in his retreat, where she has identified him by a mark upon the finger which he stretches forth from the small window of his cave to feed the birds; and on one occasion, as he returns to his hermitage, which he leaves only in the night, he finds that Margaret is there. He believes she is an evil spirit sent to tempt him; he seeks to exorcise her, and a dreadful scene ensues, as she tries to lead him away from his foul den. They part in fury, but she has left behind her sleeping boy, who, when

he wakes, by his innocent prattle wins the heart of the monk, who is quite unconscious that the child is his own. Margaret comes upon them, and beseeches her husband to take courage now that God has sent the boy to comfort him for what he has lost in her, and "that is not so very much, for the better part of love shall never cool." Eloquent is the pleading by which at last she wins him to go to Gouda Manse, which she has already prepared for his coming, and to care for the flock over which he had been appointed vicar.

The remainder of the story deals with the quiet life of Gerard in the Manse, and of Margaret,—still separated by the church and by their own consciences, but united by a living pledge of affection. At last she is taken down with the plague, and the final scene between the two is pathetic and beautiful to the last degree. Gerard can not survive her; he ends his days in a convent near the Manse; and when he confesses to the stern Father Jerome, he says:

"She was my good angel; she sustained me in my duty and charity; her face encouraged me in the pulpit; her lips soothed me under ingratitude. She intertwined herself with all that was good in my life; and after leaning on her so long, I could not go on alone. And, dear Jerome, believe me, I am no rebel against heaven. It is God's will to release me. When they threw the earth upon her poor coffin, something snapped within my bosom here that mended may not be. I heard it and I felt it. . . . He in whose hands are the issues of life and

death gave me that minute the great summons; 'twas some cord of life snapped in me. He is very pitiful. I should have lived unhappy; but He said, 'No; enough is done, enough is suffered; poor, feeble, loving servant, thy shortcomings are forgiven, thy sorrows touch their end; come thou to thy rest!'"

The child that survived them was known as the great scholar of mediaeval times, Erasmus; for the foundation of the story is laid in historic fact. The author, to use his own simile, has turned the epitome into a narrative, and the skeleton into a human figure.

There are many passages in the book that are vivid and beautiful. For instance, a fine description is given of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy:

"He could fight as well as any king going; and he could lie as well as any, except the King of France. He was a mighty hunter, and could read and write. His tastes were wide and ardent. He loved jewels like a woman, and gorgeous apparel. He dearly loved maids of honor, and indeed paintings generally, in proof of which he ennobled Jan Van Eyck. He had also a rage for giants, dwarfs, and Turks. These last stood ever planted about him, turbaned, and blazing with jewels. His agents inveigled them from Istamboul with fair promises; but, the moment he had got them, he baptized them by brute force in a large tub, and, this done, let them squat with their faces towards Mecca, and invoke Mahound as much as they pleased, laughing in his sleeve at their simplicity in fancying they were still infidels. He had lions in cages, and fleet leopards trained

by Orientals to run down hares and deer. In short, he relished all rarities, except the humdrum virtues. For anything singularly pretty, or diabolically ugly, this was your customer. The best of him was, he was open-handed to the poor; and the next best was, he fostered the arts in earnest, whereof he now gave a signal proof."

Listen to the following description of a Mystery:

"In this representation divine personages, too sacred for me to name here, came clumsily down from heaven to talk sophistry with the cardinal Virtues, the nine Muses, and the seven deadly Sins, all present in human shape, and not unlike one another. To enliven which weary stuff, in rattled the Prince of the Powers of the Air, and an imp that kept molesting him and buffeting him with a bladder, at each thwack of which the crowd were in ecstasies. When the Vices had uttered good store of obscenity and the Virtues twaddle, the celestials, including the nine Muses, went gingerly back to heaven one by one; for there was but one cloud; and two artisans worked it up with its supernatural freight, and worked it down with a winch, in full sight of the audience. These disposed of, the bottomless pit opened and flamed in the centre of the stage; the carpenters and Virtues shoved the Vices in, and the Virtues and Beelzebub and his tormentor danced merrily round the place of eternal torture to the fife and tabor."

One of the stories told in this novel seems too good to have been wholly an invention of the novelist. It is the story of the poor *curé* who was summoned before his bishop for demanding

the burial fees in advance whenever he baptized a child. His excuse to the bishop was:

"I have been *curé* of that parish seven years, and fifty children have I baptized, and buried not five. At first I used to say, 'Heaven be praised, the air of this village is main healthy,' but on searching the register book I found 'twas always so, and on probing the matter it came out that of those born at Domfont, all but here and there one did go and get hanged at Aix. But this was to defraud not their *curé* only, but the entire church of their dues; since pendards pay no funeral fees, being buried in air."

LES MISERABLES

VICTOR HUGO

I FIND it hard to understand much that I find in the modern French novel. The conduct of the characters described in "Don Quixote" or "The Betrothed" is perfectly intelligible to me. I can thread my way through mists of German psychology and the extravagances of Russian fiction, but the Frenchman of my own time is quite beyond me. And whether he appears in a novel or actual life, his conduct often seems to me as remote from the possibilities of human character as if he were an inhabitant of Mars. The older French fiction is not so incomprehensible; the absurdities of Rabelais and the follies of Gil Blas and Manon Lescaut are not unnatural, but I confess myself utterly unable to follow the motives which actuate Javert, Jean Valjean, and some of the revolutionists in "Les Miserables."

And yet in this great novel there are episodes of wonderful beauty. The natural and the impossible, the simple and the incomprehensible are thrown together in hopeless confusion. Jean Valjean, a convict discharged from the galleys after nineteen years of penal servitude, passes through the little town of "D," where every door is

closed against him. Nowhere, not even in the jail, can he find shelter for a single night, until the good bishop, as saintly and lovable a character as ever illustrated the pages of fiction, receives him in simple confidence. Jean Valjean repays his hospitality by stealing the bishop's silver candlesticks. He is arrested, but the good man, to save him from punishment, tells the gendarmes that the candlesticks have been taken with his own consent. On his way from the village Jean Valjean robs the little Gervais, a poor Savoyard. But the generosity of the bishop now produces a strange tumult in his heart, remorse overcomes him, the whole current of his life is changed, and he is at once transformed into a man as heroic and self-sacrificing as imagination can conceive.

Under the name of M. Madeleine he becomes a successful manufacturer at "*M. sur M.*," charitable, public-spirited, and beneficent, and he is elected mayor of the city. Javert, an incorruptible but unamiable sleuth hound of the police, believes that he recognizes in M. Madeleine the convict Jean Valjean, and he writes to his superior officer announcing the discovery, but the proof is insufficient, and when at last he learns that Jean Valjean has been arrested elsewhere, Javert is convinced that he has been mistaken. He thereupon appears before the mayor and tells him what he has done and asks M. Madeleine to remove him from his position, which he considers himself unqualified to fill.

Fantine, the mistress of one Tholomyès, a student, is abandoned by her lover and seeks employment, leaving her child Cosette with one Thenardier, an innkeeper at Montfermeil, by whom the little creature is maltreated and abused, while ever increasing demands are made on the poor mother for her support. Fantine obtains employment in the factory of M. Madeleine, but is discharged without his knowledge, and gradually sinks to the lowest depths of poverty and degradation. When M. Madeleine knows of her misery and the cause of it, he takes Fantine under his protection, but it is now too late, for when he learned that another man under the name of Jean Valjean was about to be sent to the galleys for robbing the little Gervais, he discloses his own identity at the trial in order to prevent another from suffering in his stead. He is arrested by Javert, and Fantine dies committing her little daughter to his care. Jean Valjean is again sent to the galleys, but he escapes, finds Cosette, rescues her from the inhuman Thenardier and his wife, and they live long together in an old house in Paris. Here he is again detected by Javert and followed, but escapes with Cosette after superhuman exertions, climbing over a high wall into a convent, where he is cherished by the old gardener whose life he had saved some time before, and after a remarkable episode in which he is buried alive for a short time, he takes service in the garden of the convent where Cosette becomes a pupil.

The boy Marius now becomes Cosette's lover, and there are many passages of natural though rather silly lovemaking, and the sacrifices made by Jean Valjean to the happiness of the young couple are extraordinary, and often indeed unnecessary and unreasonable.

Through the book the French melodramatic instinct and love for exaggeration everywhere appears. Jean Valjean himself is a man of more than human powers. His transformation from a criminal to a saint is very hard to believe. The virtues of the good people and the wickedness of the villains are excessive and unnatural. There is a small group of desperate and impossible bandits, and a small coterie of revolutionists for revolution's sake, heroic absurdities who could exist nowhere outside of France or bedlam. There are fights at the barricades and labyrinthian journeys through the sewers of Paris, a great deal of slaughtering and many hairbreadth escapes; but in this strange kaleidoscope figures of marvellous beauty sometimes appear — the little Gavroche, the *gamin* who protects and patronizes his small brothers and lodges them in the entrails of a wooden elephant; the old bourgeois, M. Gillenormand, charitable, wrong-headed, and gallant, to whom "the republic was a guillotine in the twilight and the empire a saber in the night"; and his daughter, Mlle. Gillenormand, "the incombustible prude."

When Javert, the detective, is at last overcome by the magnanimity of Jean Valjean so that he

can no longer pursue his prey and discharge his duty to the state, he finds refuge only in suicide!

There are many wise observations and brilliant passages, also a great abundance of mere conceits. For instance: "Man is not a circle with a single center, but an ellipse with two foci — facts are the one, ideas the other." There are long descriptions of motives for acts which explain themselves, and there are other acts, the motives for which are not only not explained, but quite inexplicable. There are interminable digressions everywhere. A trifling episode at Waterloo is the occasion for a very long and graphic account of that battle, which has, in fact, nothing to do with the novel. The fact that Jean Valjean happens to take refuge in a convent leads to an elaborate description of the entire conventual system; a few words of slang introduce a long treatise on *argot;* Gavroche is the peg upon which is hung a treatise on the *gamins* of Paris; and interminable discussions regarding barricades, sewers, and many other things which appear casually in the story consume more than half the entire space in the whole work. In the meantime the action is wholly suspended. Of course there are many valuable things in these digressions. Hugo is a man of encyclopædic knowledge, and much philosophy, some good, some bad, appears in the book; but the feeling is inevitable that this information and this philosophy ought to be furnished in some other place, and not hung disjointedly upon the thread of a

novel with which it has no natural connection.

But in spite of these defects, "Les Miserables" has perhaps appealed more strongly than any novel ever written to the universal sympathy of mankind for sorrow and suffering.

ROMOLA

GEORGE ELIOT

IT is no false judgment which has assigned to George Eliot a very distinguished place among the masters of fiction. This writer had a better right than perhaps any other of her sex to assume the *nom-de-plume* of a man; for one of the striking characteristics of her work is its essentially masculine quality.

"Romola" is a somber tale. There is very little merriment in it, hardly the faintest suspicion of humor, but there is a great deal of deep feeling, and perhaps even more thought than feeling. Every chapter is pervaded with reflections which are often striking, sometimes subtle, and nearly always convincing.

Many phrases can be taken from different parts of the book, which, while perfectly appropriate to the places where they are found, would also be adapted to a general collection of maxims or epigrams. For instance:

"Under every guilty secret there is hidden a brood of guilty wishes whose unwholesome infecting life is cherished by the darkness."

"There are moments when our passions speak and decide for us, and we seem to stand by and wonder."

"Our lives make a moral tradition for our individual selves, as the life of mankind at large makes a moral tradition for the race, and to have acted nobly seems a reason why we should always be noble."

"It is the lot of every man who has to speak for the satisfaction of the crowd, that he must often speak in virtue of yesterday's faith, hoping it will come back to-morrow."

Moralizing of this kind is apt to become tiresome in an ordinary writer, but George Eliot's mind, like that of Shakespeare, has the rare and masterful power of appropriately blending fiction and philosophy into a single substance.

The story opens in 1492, at the time of the death of Lorenzo dei Medici, when Tito Melema, a young Greek scholar, who has been recently shipwrecked, makes his appearance in Florence, where the barber Nello (a gossipy fellow, as barbers are wont to be, and with a smattering of learning) offers to get him introduced to Bartolomeo Scala, the Secretary of the Republic, who will perhaps employ him, and purchase some valuable gems which he has in his possession. For this purpose Nello brings him to the house of Bardo dei Bardi, a blind old scholar, who has collected a valuable library which he intends to bequeath to Florence to be kept as a memorial of himself. In this library Tito meets Romola, the daughter of Bardo and the companion and associate of her father in his classical researches. Through Bardo, Melema is

introduced to Scala, who buys some of his gems, and moreover finds the young Greek very useful to him in a war of epigrams he is waging with Politian, another celebrated scholar of the time.

The gems which Tito sells are not, however, his own. They belong to Baldasarre, a man now stricken in years, who had rescued Melema in childhood, had adopted him, had loved him, and had educated him. The galley in which Baldasarre was travelling had been taken by a Turkish vessel, and it was not certain whether he had perished or was held as a slave. Tito says to himself, "If it were certain my father is alive, I would search for him throughout the world to ransom him." But as he does not know, he keeps the money, stays in Florence, and consoles himself with the thought, "I believe he is dead."

And Tito flourishes. He assists Bardo in his studies and soon becomes enamored of Romola. And when later, a monk who has come from the East gives him a bit of parchment from his father saying: "I am sold for a slave. I think they are going to take me to Antioch. The gems alone will serve to ransom me," he reasons that he is not bound to seek his father and give up his prosperous life. But he is filled with fear lest his baseness may be discovered, when he learns that the monk who gave him the parchment is Dino, the brother of Romola.

Melema's love is returned, and old Bardo regards him as the son who has taken the place of the one who forsook him to become a monk. But

Dino is about to die. He sends for his sister and tells her a vague vision which has appeared to him, warning her not to marry. Romola, however, shares her father's skepticism of monkish prophecies, and the betrothal is not long postponed.

The second book opens after a lapse of eighteen months, when Charles VIII, the French king, is about to enter Florence. Before he comes, three prisoners are brought in bound by three French soldiers and ordered to beg money for their ransom. One of these, the oldest, escapes, and as he flees to the cathedral he encounters Tito upon the steps and clutches him by the arm. Melema turns and sees the face of Baldasarre close to his own. And when one of Tito's companions asks "Who is he?" Tito answers, "Some madman surely."

The old man, transformed into a fiend by this shameless ingratitude, now devotes his failing faculties and clouded mind to the one purpose of revenge, and Tito, filled with inexpressible terror, purchases a suit of chain armor, which Romola discovers and is filled with suspicion, not only at this, but also at a picture of "Fear" which she accidently sees, painted by Piero di Cosimo, who saw the incident on the steps of the cathedral and used her husband as his model.

In the meantime Bardo has died, and Tito, in violation of his plighted word, determines to dispose of the library of the blind scholar, appropriate the proceeds, and depart from Flor-

ence. The library is sold before he discloses this purpose to his wife. When her husband's treachery is thus made clear to her, she asks him in bitter scorn, "Have you robbed somebody else who is not dead? Is that the reason you wear armor?"

Tito is about to depart from Rome on an errand of importance. Before he leaves he goes to a banquet in the Rucellai gardens, and old Baldasarre suddenly appears before the guests and denounces him. Melema coolly declares that his accuser is an old servant, who had been dismissed for misdemeanors, and had become insane. Rucellai, the host, proceeds to test the old man's scholarship in proof of his credibility, but his memory is a blank. Tito is exonerated and Baldasarre is cast into prison.

Romola, unwilling to live longer with a husband whom she has come to despise, departs from the city. On her way Savonarola meets her, declares to her her name and purpose, and commands her to return and resume her duties, not only as wife, but as a citizen of Florence. Overcome by his commanding presence and persuasive words, she obeys and returns to her dreary home, throwing all the energy of her will into a life of renunciation.

At the opening of the third book, two years more have elapsed.

Romola learns of Tito's participation in a plot for decoying Savonarola without the walls of the city. The monk is now the support and inspira-

tion of her life. She determines to save him, and threatens to denounce her husband. The plot is thwarted, but the abyss between Romola and Melema constantly widens. Baldasarre, released from prison, tells her the story of her husband's perfidy, and also of Melema's relations to another wife, an innocent, harmless little peasant girl, named Tessa, who thinks she has been married to Tito by a sham ceremony performed by a mountebank, and by whom he has two children. And now Bernardo del Nero, Romola's godfather, to whom she is deeply devoted, has been arrested, together with a number of the companions and intimates of Tito, for conspiring to restore the Medici, and her heart is filled with loathing for her husband when she learns from him that he is safe, for she realizes that this must be by reason of some new treachery of his own. And so indeed it was. He has been playing fast and loose with each of the three factions in Florence, and betraying each by turns to secure his own safety or promotion.

Bernardo and his associates are condemned to death, and the question is whether an appeal shall be allowed to the Grand Council according to the law. Romola seeks an interview with Savonarola and implores him to intercede, reminding him that it was through his agency that the law was passed, and that he has already spoken on behalf of another and more guilty conspirator. But she fails to secure his help, and departs with deep indignation against the man who had so long been

the controlling influence of her life. She consoles Bernardo in his last moments, and is present even at the execution. Then, filled with bitterness, she flees again, and on the shore of the Mediterranean enters a small skiff and sets sail alone, drifting across the sea, hoping for death.

In the meantime Savonarola has fallen into the toils of his enemies. He has attacked the evil life of Pope Alexander, he has been excommunicated and has defied the excommunication. And now a challenge comes to him to submit to an ordeal. A Franciscan monk offers to walk through the fire with him. He declines, but his associate, Fra Domenico, accepts the challenge. The ordeal is to prove whether the tenets and prophecies of Savonarola be true or false. On the appointed day the multitude assemble to see the spectacle. Fra Domenico is ready, but there are long disputes regarding details — what garb he shall wear, whether he shall bear the crucifix or the host into the flames, until a shower of rain renders the trial impossible. But there are loud murmurs among the multitude against Savonarola. If he were a prophet, why did he not himself accept the ordeal? That night there was a wild riot, and Savonarola was arrested and hurried to prison.

In the meantime Dolpho Spini, the leader of the Compagnacci, who have instigated the riot, learns that Tito has also been false to that faction, and orders him to be seized. He escapes, leaps into the Arno and swims down the river in the

darkness, but when, exhausted and fainting, he reaches the shore, there is waiting for him among the rushes the old man Baldasarre, who has found the opportunity for vengeance, and under whose hand he falls at last.

Romola has drifted to a little village on the coast which the plague had emptied of most of its inhabitants. Here for a while she tends the suffering, and finally, reconciled again with life, she feels that she must return. When she reaches Florence and learns of her husband's death, she seeks the helpless little Tessa and her children and takes them under her protection.

And now Savonarola, amid the agonies of the torture, has confessed that he was not a prophet, and he is condemned to death. She is present at the solemn scene of execution, awaiting from him some word, free from constraint, which should tell the final truth of his past life. But he is silent upon the scaffold.

It is in the Epilogue that it first clearly appears that "Romola" is a novel with a purpose, for here the heroine, many years afterwards, in an earnest talk with Tessa's boy, thus tells him the moral of his father's life:

"There was a man to whom I was very near, so that I could see a great deal of his life, who made almost every one fond of him, for he was young and clever and beautiful, and his manners to all were gentle and kind. I believe, when I first knew him, he never thought of anything cruel or base. But because he tried to slip away from everything that was unpleasant, and cared

for nothing else so much as his own safety, he came at last to commit some of the basest deeds, such as make men infamous. He denied his father, and left him to misery; he betrayed every trust that was reposed in him, that he might keep himself safe and get rich and prosperous. Yet calamity overtook him."

The account of the gradual degeneration of the character of Tito Melema is, indeed, the strongest feature in the book. Tito was a man of sunny disposition, who never made himself disagreeable, never boasted of his own doings, was generous in small things, gave others the credit to which they were entitled, and claimed little for himself, was frank and engaging in manners, subtle in thought, supple in conduct, and had an innate love of reticence, which often acted as other impulses do, without any conscious motive. This was the character selected by the author for her story of degradation and ruin.

The painter Piero foreshadows the outcome when he desires the face of Tito as a model for his picture of Sinon deceiving old Priam: "A perfect traitor," says Piero, "should have a face which vice can write no marks on — lips that will lie with a dimpled smile — eyes of such agate-like brightness and depth that no infamy can dull them — cheeks that will rise from a murder and not look haggard."

The character of Romola herself is a very interesting one. She is full of womanly dignity and genuine nobility of soul, honorable, proud, self-sacrificing, devoted to her duty, but she is too clear-

headed to deceive herself as to her husband's baseness. At first, although her dreams of happiness have not been fulfilled, she makes every excuse; and even afterwards she seeks a return of his confidence. But when that is impossible, her love becomes entirely extinct.

Running side by side with the character of Romola, and in sharp contrast to it, is that of Tessa, the innocent peasant girl, with a baby face. In her presence, Melema finds no reproaches, nothing but artless affection. It was pity more than anything else which first induced Tito to take her under his protection, and his relations with her have been developed so unconsciously that there seems very little guilt in each particular act. No doubt the author's purpose was to describe the almost imperceptible steps by which men pass from virtue to crime.

"Romola" is a historical novel, and the part of it which deals with Savonarola is history itself, or perhaps more properly biography. George Eliot has not created the character of the Florentine monk; she has merely analyzed and interpreted that character by the light of her own imagination. Whether the man she has thus drawn is the real Savonarola or not, he is a very interesting personage, who, with many inconsistencies and shortcomings, is essentially a great man, as well as a benefactor of mankind. He is often a hero, though he falls short of heroism at the supreme moment; and his last words, written in prison before his execution, the outpouring of self-abase-

ment, fill us with added sympathy for his misfortunes.

"God placed thee," he says, "in the midst of the people even as if thou hadst been one of the excellent. In this way thou hast taught others, and hast failed to learn thyself. Thou hast cured others, and thou thyself hast been still diseased. Thy heart was lifted up at the beauty of thy own deeds, and through this thou hast lost thy wisdom, and art become, and shalt be to all eternity, nothing."

The psychological development of each of the chief characters in this remarkable book proceeds by a natural law from the antecedents and surroundings of the individual. We feel as we read that the changes of thought and motive must have occurred just as they are described, yet in that description itself it is evident that George Eliot lacks something of dramatic power. She tells us in great detail what her characters think and why they act as they do. The highest form of art would show us this from their own words and actions without the telling. Her characters are often extremely complex. It might be harder to make them speak for themselves than in the case of simpler personages, such as those described by Dickens or Cervantes. Still the reader will often wish that George Eliot had not told him so much of motives and reasons, but had left these to necessary inference.

"Romola" is a work not addressed to the great mass of mankind, but to the student. It presup-

poses considerable knowledge on the part of the reader of Italian names, customs, and events. It is evidently the product of an elaborate study and of a rather intimate knowledge of Florentine institutions and history. It is essentially accurate in its description of the public events of the time, although there are some facts of minor importance which are not confirmed by the most authentic records.

George Eliot follows the chronological and not the logical order in her narrative. There is sometimes a lack of vividness which results from this, and the book as a whole does not impress itself readily on the memory. There are portions of the work which are overloaded with details concerning public ceremonies or historical facts, or illustrating the manners of the people; for instance, the long description of the festival of San Giovanni in the early part of the book. Indeed, the feeling is irrepressible that this work, especially the first half of it, is too prolix, and that unimportant and subsidiary matters becloud in a measure the essential facts upon which the tale depends. In the latter part of the work, however, the dramatic interest of the story becomes more intense, and the narrative proceeds naturally and directly to the double tragedy with which it closes — the death of Melema and the execution of Savonarola.

" Romola " is very little like " The Scarlet Letter " either in the scenes or the construction of the plot. It is far more elaborate than the American romance, yet there is a close similarity in the

methods of thought of George Eliot and Nathaniel Hawthorne. The husband of Hester Prynne and the father of Tito Melema appear in the same sinister way, demanding vengeance. Though Florence is very little like the Puritan town, religious fanaticism is a prominent feature in both the stories. The two books leave much the same general impression upon the mind.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

FEODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

DOSTOYEVSKY is one of the masters of the Russian realistic school. His best known novel, " Crime and Punishment," is a psychological study of great power. It describes the atrocious murder of two women, an old money lender and her sister, by a young student, Raskolnikoff, and the train of events which afterwards led to the confession of the murderer and his transportation to Siberia.

Raskolnikoff has no sufficient motive for the crime, but he is led by the contemplation of Napoleon and other great men who have committed crimes to feel that he, too, is an exceptional creature, authorized to violate all laws of morality, and that he is guilty of no sin in killing the old women. His immediate purpose is robbery, to get the money necessary to prosecute his studies; yet so blunderingly does he go to work that he secures but little, and can make no use of it. The way in which his half crazed, vacillating intellect is finally induced to make a confession, is delineated with great dramatic skill. The examining magistrate, Porphryrius, also an eccentric, certainly shows great ability, not only in discerning the criminal, but in bringing him by gradual steps

into a frame of mind which leads to confession, where there is no other sufficient evidence of guilt.

Most of the individuals described in the book are morbid, and some of them are grotesque; yet the reader is impressed with the consciousness that, in spite of inconsistencies and paradoxes, the story must be essentially true to the peculiar nature of the characters described.

The maudlin babbling of the drunkard Marmeladoff, giving the story of his debasement and the ruin and dishonor into which he has plunged his family, is just such talk as that kind of a man would indulge in when in liquor, and the picture which it sets before us is revolting, but infinitely pitiful and real. All the dreadful things which happen afterwards in the drunkard's household — his tragical death, the insanity of his wife, and the beggary of their children — lie heavy upon our hearts, while they convince us that we are in a world where such things are realities.

In the girl Sonia, the eldest daughter of this household, we have the remarkable spectacle of a self-sacrificing, devoted and beautiful character, who has been constrained by necessity and by pity for her little brothers and sisters into a life of shame.

The most incomprehensible person in the story is one Svidrigailoff, an unscrupulous man of the world, given to sensuality, who commits suicide in a most unaccountable way after a nightmare. He is a character which puts at fault all calculations of what a man will do under given circumstances.

In strong contrast with the rest of the *dramatis personæ,* the mother and sister of Raskolnikoff display a dignity, strength of character and womanly tenderness which show us that Dostoyevsky is able to portray a normal and healthy character, a thing which might be otherwise in doubt.

This novel, dealing as it does with the submerged tenth of society, contains such a preponderance of repulsive features that it is by no means agreeable, nor even desirable, reading for the general public. Its tendency undoubtedly is to generate some of the morbid characteristics it describes.

SMOKE

IVAN TURGENIEFF

I HAVE never quite understood the extravagant praises showered upon Turgenieff by his admirers. A few of his short stories in "A Sportsman's Sketches" are very impressive, but his novels never appeared to me as convincing as those of Tolstoi, nor as vivid as "Dead Souls," by Gogol, though they are more highly finished and more artistic in form. Turgenieff spent most of his life in France, and his works have distinctly a French flavor. "Smoke" offers perhaps the best illustration of his distinguishing characteristics. In the preface to a late edition of this work, a critic declares that it is "in every sense of the word a classic for all time." This estimate seems high, though the book is in many ways a remarkable one.

The scene is laid at Baden-Baden, which for a long time was the residence of Turgenieff himself. Here we are introduced to a coterie of Russian "reformers" and "thinkers" of various sorts, who meet at the apartments of Gubaryoff, "a great man," who is writing a great work "about everything" (as the enthusiastic Bambaeff declares), "after the style of Buckle, you know, but more profound — more profound. Every-

thing will be solved and made clear in it." At this meeting there is a perfect Babel of inane discussion and vociferation.

"Madame Suhantchikoff talked about Garibaldi, about a certain Karl Ivanovitch, who had been flogged by the serfs of his own household, about Napoleon III, about women's work, about a merchant, Pleskatchoff, who had designedly caused the death of twelve work-women, and had received a medal for it with the inscription 'for public services'; about the proletariat, about the Georgian Prince Tchuktcheulidzoff, who had shot his wife with a cannon, and about the future of Russia. Pishtchalkin, too, talked of the future of Russia, and of the spirit of monopoly, and of the significance of nationalities, and of how he hated above everything what was vulgar. There was an outburst all of a sudden from Voroshiloff; in a single breath, almost choking himself, he mentioned Draper, Virchow, Shelgunoff, Bichat, Helmholtz, Starr, Stur, Reiminth, Johann Müller the physiologist, and Johann Müller the historian — obviously confounding them — Taine, Renan, Shtchapoff, and then Thomas Nash, Peele, Greene — 'What sort of queer fish may they be?' Bambaeff muttered bewildered. 'Shakespeare's predecessors having the same relation to him as the ranges of the Alps to Mont Blanc,' Voroshiloff replied cuttingly, and he too touched on the future of Russia. Bambaeff also spoke of the future of Russia, and even depicted it in glowing colors; but he was thrown into special raptures over the thought of Russian music, in which he saw something. 'Ah! great indeed!' and in confirmation he began humming a song of Varmaloff's, but was soon interrupted by a general shout, 'He is singing the Miserere from the Trovatore, and singing it excruci-

atingly too.' One little officer was reciting Russian literature in the midst of the hubbub; another was quoting verses from "The Spark"; but Tit Bindasoff went further; he declared that all these swindlers ought to have their teeth knocked out, . . . and that's all about it, but he did not particularize who were the swindlers alluded to. The smoke from the cigars became stifling; all were hot and exhausted, every one was hoarse, all eyes were growing dim, and the perspiration stood out in drops on every face. Bottles of iced beer was brought in and drunk off instantaneously. 'What was I saying?' remarked one; 'And with whom was I disputing, and about what?' inquired another. And amid all the uproar and the smoke, Gubaryoff walked indefatigably up and down as before, swaying from side to side and twitching at his beard; now listening, turning an ear to some controversy, now putting in a word of his own; and every one was forced to feel that he, Gubaryoff, was the source of it all, that he was the master here, and the most eminent personality."

Afterwards we are introduced into high Russian society, whose conduct is perhaps even more ridiculous. On one occasion it amuses itself (under the guidance of an American "medium") in fruitless efforts to mesmerize a crab. In another place, one Potugin, who is the pessimist of the book, dissects the short-comings of Russian character extremely well.

The story is a very simple one. Litvinoff, betrothed to Tatyana Shestoff, is lured away by the charms of Irina, a beautiful and attractive creature to whom he had once been betrothed, but who, tempted by the allurements of rank and wealth, had

discarded him. Now again he falls madly in love with her. She promises to leave her husband and to follow him anywhere; but after he has broken his engagement with Tatyana, she fails again, and he betakes himself homeward, deeply impressed with the vanity of human life. His reflections on the journey reveal the theme and motive of the story.

"The wind blew facing the train; whitish clouds of steam, some singly, others mingled with other darker clouds of smoke, whirled in endless file past the window at which Litvinoff was sitting. He began to watch this steam, this smoke. Incessantly mounting, rising, falling, twisting and hooking on to the grass, to the bushes, as though in sportive antics, lengthening out, and hiding away, clouds upon clouds flew by . . . they were for ever changing and stayed still the same in their monotonous, hurrying, wearisome sport! Sometimes the wind changed, the line bent to right or left, and suddenly the whole mass vanished, and at once reappeared at the opposite window; then again the huge tail was flung out, and again it veiled Litvinoff's view of the vast plain of the Rhine. He gazed and gazed, and a strange reverie came over him . . . He was alone in the compartment; there was no one to disturb him. 'Smoke, smoke,' he repeated several times; and suddenly it all seemed as smoke to him, everything, his own life, Russian life — everything human, especially everything Russian. 'All smoke and steam,' he thought; 'all seems for ever changing, on all sides new forms, phantoms flying after phantoms, while in reality it is all the same and the same again; everything hurrying, flying towards something, and everything vanishing without a trace, attaining to nothing;

another wind blows, and all is dashing in the opposite direction, and there again the same untiring, restless — and useless gambols!'"

At last, however, after some years devoted to conscientious labor upon his own estate, Litvinoff's engagement with Tatyana is renewed.

Certainly the character of Irina is well drawn. There is such a mixture of actual sincerity and deep passion in her intrigues, such a proud contempt for the petty world around her, such a charming humility in her momentary repentance, that it is no wonder Litvinoff yields. There is a striking similarity between this fair creature and Beatrix in "Henry Esmond," though one can not but feel that the great English novelist has drawn his heroine with a more skilful hand. It is said that one of the mistresses of Alexander II furnished the model for Irina.

In describing Tatyana Shestoff, the author gives us in a very few words a charming picture of womanly dignity and reserve, especially in the scene where Litvinoff tries to tell her that he no longer loves her.

Occasionally, in sketching his characters, Turgenieff can set before you in a short sentence a very lively picture. Take for instance, the following description of Bambaeff:

"He was no longer young; he had a flabby nose and soft cheeks, that looked as if they had been boiled, dishevelled greasy locks, and a fat squat person. Ever-

lastingly short of cash, everlastingly in raptures over something, Rostislaff Bambaeff wandered, aimless but exclamatory, over the face of our long-suffering mother-earth."

LORNA DOONE

RICHARD BLACKMORE

HOW much the apparent merit of a book depends upon the mood in which we peruse it! When I first read "Lorna Doone" I went over it rapidly, anxious to extract the meat of it as quickly as possible; and while I found many quaint observations and poetical descriptions, the style was diffuse and sometimes crabbed, the narrative was often tedious, and to my mind the book was lacking in fidelity to truth and deep knowledge of human nature. The love passages seemed particularly weak, and I found it hard to understand how a dull-witted countryman, such as John Ridd declares himself to be, could write so well and so ill in different places.

But "Lorna Doone" must not be read in that way. When I took it up a second time, lingering over some of the more striking portions of it and no longer disturbing myself about the plot, I found it quite different from what it had seemed to me at first. It is a story unlike any other, and with a charm which is all its own. The deliberate minuteness of the narrative interferes indeed with the action of the characters and the dramatic power of the tale — it is hard to seize the salient points in it; it seems lacking in perspective; the picture is

like one of the very old masters, to be studied more in detail than as a whole. The characterization of most of the personages is not very striking, and yet there is one that is finely drawn — that of John Ridd himself; for it is he, and not Lorna, who is the chief personage of the story. Here the archaic diction, the homespun phrases, the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, and the quaint philosophy show very plainly the essential characteristics of the narrator, a modest, sturdy, honest, big-hearted farmer, Herculean, slow in speech and in wrath, but terrible when aroused. The roots of his character are planted deep in the soil. "I feel," he says, "with every blade of grass as if it had a history, and make a child of every bud, as if it knew and loved me." He is a lover both of nature and his kind, such a man in a smaller sphere as our Lincoln must have been. What wonderful descriptions of farm life, of the ducks, the pigs, the horses, the birds, as well as of natural phenomena, the sunsets, the deep Doone valley, the great snowstorm which buried all the earth!

Many of the scenes are admirably described, as where he watches the passing of the bandits along the Doone track and sees the figure of the little girl thrown across the saddle; the murder of his father by the outlaws and his mother's solitary visit to the stronghold of the murderers in vain quest of justice; his first expedition to the Doone Valley, and his meeting with the beautiful girl who afterwards becomes his wife; his interview with the terrible Chief Justice Jef-

freys, whose eyes "were holes for the devil to glare from"; and, finest of all, the sad story told by Benita, the Italian maid, of the fate of Lorna's parents and the attack upon the coach when Lorna was carried away. Such excellences are more than enough to redeem the tediousness of the less important parts of the book, and to entitle it to a high as well as a unique place in literature.

ANNA KARENINA

LYOF TOLSTOI

THERE are a few great works, both in art and literature, which impress us not so much by their beauty as by their compelling power. No one can listen to the "Ring of the Nibelungs" without feeling the hand of a master in the creation of the harmonies it contains. No one can look on the figures painted by Michael Angelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel without a sense of awe in the presence of forms of such majesty and power. The nameless bronze by St. Gaudens, known as the Adams Monument, in the Rock Creek Cemetery at Washington will impose silence upon a chattering group of visitors the moment they enter the enclosure of evergreens that surrounds it. The rage of Othello and the horror of Macbeth make us shudder whether we will or no. Dante has the same commanding power over his readers.

Among the writers of fiction there is none who impress us in this way more profoundly than Tolstoi. His novels are often quite formless. There is no carefully developed plot, as with Scott or Wilkie Collins. The characters are by no means so strongly marked, they are neither so admirable nor so detestable as those of

Dickens or of Victor Hugo. There is little humor in the narrative. The conversation is seldom brilliant, and is sometimes tedious. The style has no ornamentation, yet its very simplicity commands, and while we read we feel that we are in the hands of a master.

Probably no one since Shakespeare has had the power of penetrating the springs of human thought and action more accurately than Tolstoi. He startles us with revelations of traits in our own character which we have never realized, or instants in our own lives which we have never recalled before and which we recognize at once when we see them upon his pages, so that at every turn we exclaim, "How true that is! I have known that myself!" He is the greatest of all realists — not a mere photographer, for the photographer reproduces the insignificant and the unessential. Tolstoi gives us no long preliminary descriptions of persons or things, such as we find in Balzac or Walter Scott, but the really suggestive fact or trait appears at the right moment and gives a vividness and reality to the picture which no detailed account could ever convey.

A mother is teaching her son. "The boy was reading aloud, but at the same time twisting and trying to pull from his vest a button that was hanging loose. His mother had many times reproved him, but the plump little hand kept returning to the button. At last she had to take the button off and put it in her pocket. 'Keep your hands still, Grisha,' said she, and again took up the bed-

quilt on which she had long been at work and which always came handy at trying moments. She worked nervously, jerking her fingers and counting the stitches."

In another place a father is instructing his child. "The lesson consisted of a recitation of several verses of the Gospel and the review of the first part of the Old Testament. The lesson went fairly well, but suddenly the boy was struck by the appearance of his father's forehead, which made almost a right angle near the temples, and he gave the end of the verses entirely wrong. The father concluded he did not understand what he was reciting and was vexed."

The leader in a ball room pays a compliment to his partner. "'It is restful to dance with you,' said he, as he fell into the slow measures of the waltz. 'Charming! Such lightness! such precision!' This is what he said to almost all his dancing acquaintances."

These slight touches give a better idea of what takes place than many words. The descriptions, as we have observed, are few and brief, but how graphic are they in their simple statements!

The visit of Levin, the country proprietor, to his stable to see a cow which has just calved is thus narrated. "Crossing the courtyard, where the snow was heaped under the lilac bushes, he stepped up to the stable. As he opened the door, which creaked on its frosty hinges, he was met by the warm, penetrating breath from the stalls, and the cattle, astonished at the unwonted

light of the lantern, turned around from their beds of fresh straw. The shiny black and white face of his Holland cow gleamed in the obscurity. Berkut, the bull, with a ring in his nose, tried to get to his feet but changed his mind and only snorted when they approached his stanchion. The beautiful Pava, huge as a hippopotamus, was lying near her calf, snuffing at it and protecting it with her back as with a rampart from those who would come too close.

"Levin entered the stall, examined Pava, and lifted the calf, spotted with red and white, on its long, awkward legs. Pava bellowed with anxiety, but was reassured when the calf was restored to her and began to lick it with her rough tongue. The calf hid its nose under its mother's side and frisked its tail."

No one has ever described the coming of Spring more vividly yet more simply than Tolstoi. "It snowed on Easter Sunday. Then suddenly on the following day a south wind blew up, the clouds drifted over, and for three days and three nights a warm and heavy rain fell ceaselessly. On Thursday the wind went down, and then over the earth was spread a thick gray mist, as if to conceal the mysteries that were accomplishing in nature: the ice in every direction was melting and disappearing; the rivers overflowed their banks; the brooks came tumbling down with foamy, muddy waters. Towards evening the Red hill began to show through the fog, the clouds drifted away like white sheep, and Spring in reality was there in all

her brilliancy. Next morning a bright sun melted away the thin scales of ice which still remained, and the warm atmosphere grew moist with the vapors rising from the earth. The dry grass immediately took a greenish tint, and the young blades began to peep from the sod like millions of tiny needles. The buds on the birch trees, the gooseberry bushes, and the snow-ball trees swelled with sap, and around their branches swarms of honey bees buzzed in the sun. Invisible larks sent forth their songs of joy to see the prairies free from snow. The lapwings seemed to mourn their marshes, submerged by the stormy waters. The wild swans and geese flew high in the air, with their calls of spring. The cows, with rough hair and places worn bare by the stanchions, lowed as they left their stalls. Around the heavy, flossy sheep gambolled awkwardly the young lambs. Children ran barefoot over wet paths, where their footprints were left like fossils. The peasant women gossiped gaily around the edge of the pond where they were bleaching their linen. From all sides resounded the axes of the peasants, repairing their plows and their wagons. Spring had really come."

The shattering of an ideal by a single word of disparagement is thus shown when a young girl hears from her father that the pious Madame Stahl, whom she had idolized, kept her bed because one leg was shorter than the other and she did not wish it noticed. "Her ideal of holiness, as seen in Madame Stahl, which she had for a

whole month carried in her soul, had irrevocably disappeared, as a face seen in a garment thrown down by chance disappears when one really sees how the garment is lying. She retained only the image of a lame woman who stayed in bed to conceal her deformity, and who tormented poor Varenka because her plaid was not arranged to suit her, and it became impossible for her imagination to bring back to her the remembrance of the former Madame Stahl."

How could domestic discomfort be better pictured than when a mother, with her six children, arrives at her country home and undergoes the following tribulations:

"The roof was leaking, the water dripped in the corridor and the nursery, and the little beds had to be brought down into the parlor. It was impossible to find a cook. Among the nine cows in the barn, according to the dairy-woman's report, some were going to calve and the rest were either too young or too old, and consequently they could not have butter, or even milk for the children. Not an egg was to be had; it was impossible to find a hen. They had for roasting or broiling one tough old purple rooster. No women were to be found to do the washing; all were at work in the fields. They could not drive because one of the horses was balky and would not be harnessed. They had to give up bathing because the bank of the river had been trodden into a quagmire by the cattle, and, moreover, it was too conspicuous. . . . Walking near the

house was not pleasant because the tumble-down fences let the cattle into the garden and there was in the herd a terrible bull that bellowed and was reported to be ugly. In the house there was not a clothes-press. The closet doors either would not shut or flew open when any one passed. In the kitchen there were no pots or kettles; in the laundry there were no tubs, nor even any scrubbing-boards for the girls."

Nowhere, perhaps, in all literature, is a hunting expedition so graphically described as in the account of the party that set forth from Levin's. The feelings of the hunters and of the dogs themselves are given with quiet but convincing realism.

It may be doubted whether some of Tolstoi's shorter works are not more artistic productions than either of his two long novels. To take the single instance of a rather common-place official who falls ill and dies and to make out of it the terrible tragedy of "Ivan Ilytch" requires, perhaps, even higher powers than to give such variegated pictures of life as appear in "War and Peace" or in "Anna Karenina." Yet the latter novel, being many-sided and comprehensive, is perhaps his most representative, as it is certainly his best known work, and it must justly be ranked as among the very foremost of the masterpieces of fiction.

The book opens with an account of the confusion in the house of the Oblonskys when the easy-going and good-tempered Prince Stepan is detected by his wife Dolly in an intrigue with the

French governess, and whose "stupid smile" when confronted with the letter that betrays him, "causes the whole trouble." The Prince can not really repent and persuade himself that he loves his wife, whose charms have faded; he regrets only that he had not hid the thing more adroitly, and his sister Anna is called from Petersburg to Moscow to secure a reconciliation. Although he was entirely wrong, almost every one in the house was on his side, except his little girl, who knew only that there was trouble and that her mother was unhappy and who blushed for her father when he asked her so lightly after her mother's welfare, until he too blushed when he perceived it. About the same time Levin, the country proprietor, also comes to Moscow to woo Kitty, the younger sister of the unfortunate wife. He had fallen in love successively with each of the daughters of the house, but his affection was now centered on the youngest, whom he deemed a creature so accomplished that he scarcely dared aspire to her hand. They had been old friends for many years, but Kitty had then another admirer, one Vronsky, a brilliant young officer, to whom at the moment her preference was given and Levin's blunt offer was rejected. But Vronsky, who had gone to the railway station to meet his mother (whom he did not love and to whom for that very reason he was all the more conventionally considerate) found her in company with Anna Karenina, who had come to Moscow to compose Dolly's troubles with her husband.

Anna is the beautiful and accomplished wife of Karenin, an estimable but matter-of-fact Russian official, greatly her senior in age, who was making for himself an enviable career in the public service. At the station and afterwards at a ball Anna meets the young officer, and the two instantly fall in love with each other with a passion so deep and lasting that it can not afterwards be extinguished. This passion is at first, however, expressed only by inferences. Thus, an accident occurs at the station; a train-hand is crushed, and a pitiful scene described when the widow perceives his dead body; Vronsky leaves two hundred roubles for her relief, an act which Anna sees and feels that it "concerns herself too closely." Anna composes successfully the domestic trouble between Prince Stepan and his wife, and here, too, the complete reconciliation appears in the chiding and ironical banter renewed between the pair rather than from any express acknowledgment.

But Anna, who has thus healed the wound in her brother's household, has torn open one far more fatal in her own. Vronsky, who has neglected Kitty for the brilliant creature in whom his whole soul is now absorbed, meets Anna again at the station as she leaves. "I came simply for this, to be where you are," he said. "I could not do otherwise." Her eyes belied the remonstrance that she forced to her lips, and when she returned to Petersburg, where her husband was waiting for her, her first thought as she gazed on his really distinguished face was, "Good Lord!

Why are his ears so long?" When Vronsky afterwards meets her at a drawing-room in that city and she has forbidden him to speak of love, she feels that by the very use of the word "forbidden" she has recognized a certain jurisdiction over him which has encouraged him to speak.

Her husband, who had noticed that others were observing the *tête-à-tête* between his wife and the handsome officer, resolved to admonish her. "'Anna, I must put you on your guard.'

"'On my guard? Why?' She looked at him so gayly, so innocently, that for any one who did not know her as her husband did the tone of her voice would have sounded perfectly natural, but for him, who knew that he could not deviate from the least of his habits without her asking the reason, who knew that her first impulse was always to tell him of her pleasures and her sorrows, the fact that Anna took special pains not to observe his agitation, or even to speak, was very significant to him. He felt by the very tone that she assumed that she had said openly and without dissimulation, 'Well, thus it must be, and from henceforth.' He felt like a man who should come home and find his house barricaded against him. . . .

"'Your rather too lively conversation this evening with Count Vronsky attracted attention.' As he spoke he looked at Anna's laughing eyes, for him so impenetrable, and saw with a feeling of terror all the idleness and uselessness of his words.

. . . . He trembled; again he twisted his fingers till the knuckles cracked.

"'I beg of you, keep your hands still; I detest that,' said she.

"'Anna, is this you?' he said, trying to control himself and stop the movement of his hands."

When he declares that he loves her a frown passes over her face. The word irritates her.

"'Love!' she thought; 'does he even know what it means!' And when they retired she waited long without moving, expecting that he would speak to her, but he said nothing. Then the image of another filled her with emotion and with guilty joy. Suddenly she heard a slow and regular sound of snoring. 'Too late! Too late!' she thought, with a smile. She remained for a long time thus, motionless, with open eyes, the shining of which it seemed to her she herself could see. From this night a new life began for Karenin and his wife. There was no outward sign of it. Anna continued to go into society, and everywhere she met Vronsky. Karenin understood it, but was powerless to prevent it. Whenever he tried to bring about an explanation she met him with humorous surprise which was beyond his penetration."

Another incident revealed to him still more clearly the terrible truth. A hurdle race at which Vronsky rode is described with a realism of which Tolstoi only is the master. Anna's husband observes her while she watches the contest in which her lover is involved. "Her face was pale and

stern. Nothing existed for her beyond the one person whom she was watching. Her hands convulsively clutched her fan. She held her breath. . . . . He did not wish to look at her, but his gaze was irresistibly drawn to her face, whereon he read only too plainly and with feelings of horror all that he had tried to ignore." When others fell in the race he saw that those were not the ones on whom her gaze was riveted. "The more he studied her face the greater became his shame. Absorbed as she was in her interest in Vronsky's course, Anna was conscious that her husband's cold eyes were upon her, and she turned around toward him for an instant questioningly and with a slight frown. 'Ah! I don't care,' she seemed to say as she turned her glass to the race. She did not look at him again. The race was disastrous. Out of the seventeen riders more than half were thrown, and at last Vronsky fell. The terror caused by this was so universal that Anna's cry of horror caused no astonishment, but her face continued to show more lively symptoms of her anxiety. She lost her presence of mind; she tried to escape like a bird caught in a snare. Her husband hastened to her and offered her his arm.

"'Come, if it is your wish to go,' he said in French; but she did not heed him, and gazed at the place where Vronsky had fallen. Her husband offered his arm again, and she drew back with aversion."

At last, however, she feels compelled to ac-

company him to the carriage, and on the way home he reproves her.

"'You have behaved improperly, and I would ask you not to let this happen again.'

"She heard only half of his words; she felt overwhelmed with fear; and she thought only of Vronsky, and whether he was killed. . . . . She looked at her husband with an ironical smile, and answered not a word, because she had not noticed what he said. At first he had spoken boldly; but as he saw clearly what he was speaking about, the terror which possessed her seized him. At first her smile led him into a strange mistake. 'She is amused at my suspicions! She is going to tell me now that they are groundless; that this is absurd.' Such an answer he longed to hear: he was so afraid that his suspicions would be confirmed, that he was ready to believe any thing she might say. But the expression of her gloomy and frightened face allowed no further chance of falsehood.

"'Possibly I am mistaken,' said he: 'in that case, I beg you to forgive me.'

"'No, you are not mistaken,' she replied, with measured words, casting a look of despair on her husband's icy face. 'You are not mistaken: I hear you, but I am thinking only of him. I love him. I have been false to you. I cannot endure you, I fear you, I hate you! Do with me as you please!' And, throwing herself into the bottom of the carriage, she covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears." . . .

"No one except Karenin's most intimate friends suspected that this apparently cold and rational man had one weakness absolutely contradictory to the general consistency of his character. He could not look on with indifference when a child or a woman was weeping. The sight of tears caused him to lose his self-control, and destroyed for him his reasoning faculties.

"Karenin in spite of his anger against his wife could not forget the feeling which her weeping caused, and in his effort to control himself his face assumed an appearance of deathlike rigidity. When he reached home he deliberated upon his course. He thought of a duel, but as he was a timid man, he discarded it. He knew that 'his friends would never allow him to fight and permit the life of a government official so indispensable to Russia to be exposed to danger.' The service of the state, always important, assumed unwonted magnitude. As to divorce, public scandal would cause him to fall in public opinion. Separation was equally impossible. His only course was to keep his wife under his protection, doing what he could to break off her illicit relationship with Vronsky and preserving in every way possible his ostensible relations with her. 'Only by acting in this manner,' he thought to himself, 'did he conform with the laws of religion, refusing to send away his guilty wife and consecrating his powers to her regeneration.' He had not thought of finding a foothold in religion until he had settled the matter upon other grounds, then this

sanction gave him full comfort and satisfaction."

But the illicit relations continued and the scandal grew, until at last divorce seemed to him the only remedy, and he began to make preparations for the suit, but from this project he was recalled by a telegram from his wife that she was dying and would die easier if she had his forgiveness. When he reached his home, the Swiss opened the door even before Karenin rang the bell; dressed in an old coat and slippers.

"'How is the *baruina!*'

"'She is as comfortable as could be expected.'

"Karenin turned very pale; he realized how deeply he had hoped for her death." . . .

"A uniform overcoat hung in the hall. Karenin noticed it, and asked,—

"'Who is here?'

"'The doctor, the nurse, and Count Vronsky.'

"Karenin went into the drawing-room. There was nobody there; but the sound of his steps brought the nurse, in a cap with lilac ribbons, out of the *boudoir.* She came to Karenin, and, taking him by the hand with the familiarity that the approach of death permits, led him into the sleeping-room.

"'Thank the Lord that you have come! She talks of nothing but you; always of you,' she said.

"'Bring some ice quick!' said the imperative voice of the doctor from the chamber.

"In the *boudoir,* sitting on a little low chair, Karenin saw Vronsky weeping, his face covered with his hands. He started at the sound of the

doctor's voice, uncovered his face, and found himself in the presence of Karenin. The sight of him disturbed him so much that he sank down in his chair, as if he wanted to disappear out of sight; then, making a great effort, he rose, and said,—

"'She is dying: the doctors say that there is no hope. I am in your power. Only allow me to remain here. I will conform to your wishes in every other respect. I'—

"When he saw Vronsky in tears, Karenin felt the involuntary tenderness that the sufferings of others always caused him: he turned away his head without replying, and went to the door."

. . . . . .

"Karenin's wrinkled face expressed acute suffering: he wanted to speak, but his lower lip trembled so that he could not utter a word, and his emotion hardly allowed him to glance at his dying wife. He took her hand, and held it between his own. Every time that he turned his head towards her, he saw her eyes fixed on him with a sweetness and a humility that he had never seen there before.

"'Wait! you do not know — Wait, wait!' She stopped to collect her thoughts. 'Yes,' she began again, 'yes, yes, yes, this is what I want to say. Do not be astonished. I am always the same, but there is another being within me, whom I fear: it is she who loved him, *him*, and hated you; and I could not forget what I had once been. Now I am myself, entirely, really myself, and not another. I am dying, I know that I am dy-

ing. . . . One thing only is indispensable to me: forgive me, forgive me wholly! I am a sinner; but Serozha's nurse told me that there was a holy martyr — what was her name? — who was worse than I. I will go to Rome: there is a desert there. I shall not trouble anybody there. I will only take Serozha and my little daughter. No, you cannot forgive me: I know very well that it is impossible. Go away, go away! you are too perfect!'

"She held him with one of her burning hands, and pushed him away with the other.

"Karenin's emotion became so great that he could no longer control himself. He suddenly felt his emotions change to a moral reconciliation, which seemed like a new and unknown happiness. He had not believed that the Christian law, which he had taken for a guide in life, ordered him to forgive and love his enemies; and yet his soul was filled with love and forgiveness. Kneeling beside the bed, he laid his forehead on her arm, the fever of which burned through the sleeve, and sobbed like a child." . . .

"Vronsky came to the side of the bed, and, when he saw Anna, he hid his face in his hands.

"'Uncover your face, look at him, he is a saint,' said she. 'Uncover your face! look at him!' she repeated in an irritated manner. 'Karenin, uncover his face: I want to see him.'

"Karenin took Vronsky's hands and uncovered his face, disfigured by suffering and humiliation.

"'Give him your hand; forgive him.'

"Karenin held out his hand to him, without trying to keep back the tears." . . .

"'The happiness I feel at being able to forgive, clearly shows me my duty. I offer the other cheek to the smiter: I give my last cloak to him who has robbed me. I only ask one thing of God,— that he will not take away from me this joy of forgiving.'

"Tears filled his eyes. Vronsky was amazed at the calm, luminous face.

"'These are my feelings. You may drag me in the dust, and make me the laughing-stock of creation; but I will not give up Anna for that, nor will I utter a word of reproach to you,' continued Karenin. 'My duty seems clear and plain to me: I must remain with her; I shall remain with her. If she wishes to see you, I shall inform you of it; but now I think it will be better for you to go away.'

"Karenin rose: sobs choked his voice. Vronsky rose too, and, standing with bowed head and humble attitude, looked up at Karenin, without a word to say. He was incapable of understanding Karenin's feelings, but he felt that such magnanimity was above him, and irreconcilable with his conception of life."

But Anna recovers, and her old guilty love for Vronsky returns. She flees with him to other countries in Europe, but the tumult in her soul will not subside and social ostracism confronts her everywhere. She returns with Vronsky and lives for a time on his estates in Russia, and there are

brief intervals of happiness. Dolly visits her and finds that "Anna was all aglow with that elusive beauty which comes to a woman through the assurance of love returned. Her smiles which, as it were, flew over her face, her brilliant eyes, her graceful and quick motions, her voice, her whole person, from the dimples of her cheeks and the curve of her lip, with its full, rich sounds, and even the quiet, friendly manner in which she replied to a visitor who asked permission to mount her horse, was instinct with a seductive charm. It seemed as if she herself knew it, and was pleased."

But this is for a moment. In spite of her passion and the constant devotion of her lover quarrels continually arise, jealousies, the fear of abandonment, and at last the desire for revenge upon one who she unjustly imagines is false or indifferent. Her final resolution is suicide, "to make him repent." She accomplishes her purpose at a railway station under the same conditions as those when she first met her lover.

"Suddenly she remembered the man who was run over on the day when she saw Vronsky for the first time, and she knew then what was in store for her. With light and swift steps she descended the stairway which led from the pump at the end of the platform down to the rails, and stood very near the train, which was slowly passing by. She looked under the cars, at the chains and the brake, and the high iron wheels, and she tried to estimate with her eye the distance between the fore and

back wheels, and the moment when the middle would be in front of her.

" 'There,' she said, looking at the shadow of the car thrown upon the black coal-dust which covered the sleepers, 'there, in the center, he will be punished, and I shall be delivered from it all,—and from myself.'

" Her little red travelling-bag caused her to lose the moment when she could throw herself under the wheels of the first car: she could not detach it from her arm. She awaited the second. A feeling like that she had experienced once, just before taking a dive in the river, came over her, and she made the sign of the cross. This familiar gesture called back to her soul memories of youth and childhood. Life, with its elusive joys, glowed for an instant before her, but she did not take her eyes from the car; and when the middle, between the two wheels, appeared, she threw away her red bag, drawing her head between her shoulders, and, with outstretched hands, threw herself on her knees under the car. She had time to feel afraid. 'Where am I? What am I doing? Why?' thought she, trying to draw back; but a great, inflexible mass struck her head, and threw her upon her back. 'Lord, forgive me all!' she murmured, feeling the struggle to be in vain. . . . And the candle by which she read, as in a book, the fulfilment of her life's work, of its deceptions, its grief, and its torment, flared up with greater brightness than she had ever known, revealing to her all that before was in darkness,

then flickered, grew faint, and went out forever."

Side by side with this tragedy of unlawful passion, the scenes alternating every few chapters, is the development of the normal love of Levin for Kitty, in scenes which are believed to have been taken from the life of Tolstoi himself. Strange to say that, if this be so, the passages of his own experience are less impressive (if not less realistic) than his imaginative story of the guilty pair. There are long and inconsequent discussions of agrarian problems, and a revelation of Levin's varying moods, which are, indeed, extremely true to life, but awaken less sympathy or interest than the drama between Anna and Vronsky. Levin proposes to Kitty again, rather awkwardly, one would say, with chalk initials written on a card table, the meaning of which she guesses and answers in kind, an answer which he readily devines. Before their marriage he makes to her a full written confession of all the shortcomings of his past life. She is not at all alarmed or startled at his declaration of religious unbelief, but certain passages revealing past immoralities impress her as "terrible." He finds her in tears, and she reproaches him for showing it to her, yet grants him forgiveness. The wedding is graphically described, especially the incident which shows the bridegroom "ramping with despair like a wild beast in its cage" while the people were waiting in church, because he could not find his shirt. Then comes the honeymoon, in which he finds that

married life was utterly different from his dreams.

"His surprise was great to find this charming and poetic Kitty, thinking, planning, taking charge of the linen, the furniture, the mattresses, the table service, the kitchen. The decided way in which she refused to travel, so that they might come immediately to their country home, and her willingness to let it be known that she knew something about domestic economy, and could think of such things in spite of her love, had struck him even during their engagement. It vexed him then, and now he felt still more vexed to find that she cared for these wearisome minutiae and the material side of life. But he saw that it was unavoidable."

Their early quarrels are delineated with convincing realism, and perhaps the strongest chapters in this part of the work are those in which he describes Kitty's insistence on going with him to visit his profligate brother, Nikolai, who is dying with consumption and in great poverty, being tended only by a poor creature who had long lived with him as his wife. Levin at first refused to allow her to go, declaring it impossible.

"'I tell you, if you go, I am going too. I shall certainly go with you,' said she with angry determination. 'I should like to know why it would be impossible. Why did you say that?'

"'Because God knows when or in what place I shall find him, or by what means I shall reach him. You would only hinder me,' said he, doing his best to retain his self-control.

"'Not at all, I don't need anything. Where you can go, I can go, too, and'—

"'Well! If it were only because of this woman, with whom you cannot come in contact.'—

"'Why not? I know nothing about all that, and don't want to know. I know that my husband's brother is dying; that my husband is going to see him; and I am going too'—

"'Kitty! don't be angry! and remember that in such a serious time it is painful for me to have you add to my grief by showing your weakness, — the fear of being alone. If you are lonely, go to Moscow'—

"'You *always* ascribe to me that I have such miserable sentiments,' she cried, choking with tears of vexation. 'I am not so weak. . . . I know it is my duty to be with my husband when he is in sorrow, and you want to wound me on purpose. You don't want to take me'—

"'Ah! this is frightful! to be such a slave!' cried Levin, rising from the table, no longer able to hide his anger.

"'Why, then, did you get married? You might have been free. Why — if you repent already?'— and Kitty fled from the room.

"When he went to find her, she was sobbing.

"He began to speak, striving to find words, not to persuade her, but to calm her. She would not listen, and did not allow one of his arguments. He bent over her, took one of her recalcitrant hands, kissed it, kissed her hair, and then her hands again; but still she refused to speak. But

when, at length, he took her head between his two hands and called her, 'Kitty,' she softly wept, and the reconciliation was complete."

He found his brother suffering, amid squalid and sordid surroundings. Levin was struck with the uncleanliness and disorder of the room, and the bad air and the sick man's groans, and it seemed to him that there was no hope. It did not occur to him to investigate how his poor limbs were lying, under the coverlid, to try to comfort him materially, and if he could not improve his condition, at least to make the best of a bad situation. The mere thought of these details made a cold chill run down his back; and the sick man, feeling instinctively that his brother was powerless to help him, was irritated. So Levin kept leaving the room under various pretexts, and coming back again,— unhappy to be with his brother, still more unhappy to be away from him, and unable to stay alone by himself.

"Kitty saw these things under a very different light: as soon as she came near the dying man, she was filled with pity for him, and instead of feeling fear or repulsion, her womanly heart moved her to seek every means of ameliorating his sad condition. Convinced that it was her duty to help him, she did not doubt the possibility of making him more comfortable, and she set herself to work without delay. The details which repelled her husband were the very ones which attracted her attention. She sent for a doctor, she went to the drug store; she set her maid and Marya Nikolay-

evna to sweeping, washing, and dusting, and she helped them herself. She had all needless articles carried away, and she had them replaced by things that were needed. Without minding those whom she met on the way, she came and went from her room to her brother-in-law's, unpacking the articles that were necessary,— cloths, pillow-cases, towels, nightshirts. . . .

" ' Go and get a little flask out of my bag, and bring it to me,' she said to her husband. ' In the meantime we will finish fixing him.'

" When Levin came back with the flask, the invalid was lying down in bed, and everything about him had assumed a different appearance. Instead of the stuffy air which they were breathing before, Kitty was perfuming the room with aromatic vinegar from an atomizer. The dust was all gone; a carpet was spread under the bed; on a little table were arranged the medicine vials, a *carafe,* the necessary linen, and Kitty's English embroidery. On another table, near the bed, stood a candle, his medicine, and powders. The sick man, bathed, with smoothly brushed hair, lying between clean sheets, and propped up by several pillows, was dressed in a clean nightshirt, the white collar of which came around his extraordinarily long, thin neck. A new expression of hope shone in his eyes as he looked at Kitty. . . .

" ' He has hidden it from the wise, and revealed it unto children and fools,' thought Levin as he was talking with his wife a little while later."

The description of the sufferings and death of

Nikolai are given with a fidelity to truth which must commend itself to all those who have witnessed the last days of agony in those who are near to them.

We are now led on to another scene of Tolstoi's realism, the birth of his first child, and here, too, every detail — the cheerfulness of the young wife amid her suffering, the terror, anxiety, and utter uselessness of the husband upon this critical occasion — were never set forth with greater power. Tolstoi writes very freely upon subjects in regard to which we English-speaking people deal with restraint and much false modesty, so that his plain-speaking is quite startling to us as we read.

In the later pages of the book are described the conversion of Levin (probably Tolstoi himself) to that religious faith which became the controlling force of his life. Evidently he had not advanced very far when the book closed, for this religious regeneration did not materially change his nature for the better nor make him so happy as he hoped, and he thus concludes: "I shall probably continue to be vexed with Ivan the coachman, and get into useless discussions, and express my thoughts blunderingly. I shall always be blaming my wife for what annoys me, and repenting at once. I shall always feel a certain barrier between the sanctuary of my inmost soul, and the souls of others, even my wife's. I shall continue to pray without being able to explain to myself why, but my inward life has conquered its liberty. It will

be no longer at the mercy of circumstances; and my whole life, every moment of my life, will be, not meaningless as before, but full of deep meaning, which I shall have power to impress on every action."

In "Anna Karenina" the contrast is very strong between the two pairs, Anna and Vronsky on the one hand, and Levin and Kitty on the other, between the course of illicit and of lawful love. Yet one can not lay down the book without feeling that the concluding chapters have fallen off a little in power from those that had preceded them. But despite its prolixity and thus weakening at its close Anna Karenina is entitled to a place beside the very best that human genius has accomplished in the literature of fiction.

TREASURE ISLAND

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

AS a story of pure adventure, "Treasure Island" stands in the very first rank. The plot is admirably conceived.

The novel opens with a description of "Bones," an old buccaneer who comes with his strong sea-chest to the "Admiral Benbow" inn, singing the refrain which reappears in many places through the story:

> "Fifteen men on the dead man's chest,
> Yo! ho! ho! and a bottle of rum!"

His main purpose is to avoid observation, but he is at last discovered by some of his former comrades whose object is to get possession of his chest and the chart that is in it. This chart describes a place of buried treasure. Bones, who has been drinking himself to death, expires just before an attack upon the house by his fellow bandits. The chart falls into the possession of the innkeeper's son (the man who tells the story), and he brings it to Squire Trelawney, who charters a schooner to go in search of the treasure, but when the vessel draws near the island in which the treasure is buried, it is found that most of the crew hired

by the garrulous squire belong to a band of pirates under the orders of Long John Silver, the one-legged cook. The conspiracies, the counterplots, the combats and murders on ship and shore, before the treasure is secured and carried home, are related in Stevenson's wonderful style. Even in the wildest extravagancies there is an air of probability which leads the imagination captive. The description of Long John himself, with his plausible and garrulous good-nature concealing the most diabolical character, is very lifelike. And those of us who know nothing of buccaneers and their ways are quite convinced that the men described in "Treasure Island" are just the sort of people that pirates must really be.

From "Robinson Crusoe" to "Treasure Island" there is a long step in advance.